$4.99 US
COMICS TV/FILM & MORE
BLEEDING COOL
MAR 2013
ISSUE 3
COMIC BOOK PRICE GUIDE
SCI-FI COMIC & FILM SPECIAL
GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY
DEJAH THORIS
PLANET OF THE APES
FIREFLY
STAR WARS
DOCTOR WHO
STAR TREK
WWW.BLEEDINGCOOL.COM
03011
8 20023 00772 1

BCM #3 Introduction by Rich Johnston

The very best science fiction is never about the future. It is about the present or the recent past. So, just from Vertigo's offerings in this arena, *Transmetropolitan* is about politics and media, their excesses exaggerated. *DMZ* is about the way Americans see their country. *Saucer Country* is about both conspiracy theories and the changing demography of America through immigration. Two more this year, one from Scott Snyder, another from Jeff Lemire, will probably go down similar roads, too.

Steampunk and Dieselpunk comics like *Grandville* and *Uber*, space opera like *Saga* and *Elephantmen* and hardcore sci-fi like *Infinity Vacation* and *Manhattan Projects* take us down those sci-fi corridors in different ways.

Of course those may be the more pure science fiction comics of late, but the superhero comic is steeped in science fiction, radioactivity, visitors from other planets, people equipped with impossible gadgets and aliens whose technology was so advanced they look to us as gods. Yet, *Green Lantern* is rarely seen as a science fiction comic.

But with Thanos and *Guardians of the Galaxy* getting increased profiles thanks to the movies, and the possibility of Marvel getting Star Wars comics, odds are higher people will start exploring the science-fiction dollar...

Contents

002 **LIFE IN THE GUTTERS** By Rich Johnston

006 **RISE OF THE PLANET OF THE APES COMICS** by James Kuhoric

014 **THE DOCTOR IS IN** by Gavin Lees

020 **REVIVING THE HORROR GENRE** by James Kuhoric

026 **THE COMING OF HARBINGER WARS** by Rick Verbanas

036 **THE STAR WARS COMIC BOOKS** by Rich Handley

046 **SIX SCI-FI MOVIE FIXES FOR 2013** by Brendon Connelley

049 **THE BLACK BOLT LIST** by Rich Johnston

058 **STAR TREK: THIS GENERATION** by Rick Verbanas

063 **BIG! BOLD! BOOM!** by James Kuhoric

070 **DEJAH THORIS AND THE WARLORD OF MARS** by Keith Davidson

078 **LOOKING AT ASPEN IN 2013** by Chris Arrant

082 GALACTICA VS. FIREFLY
by Rich Handley

088 GET CROSSED: C-DAY 2013
by James Kuhoric

091 GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY
by Brendon Connelly

094 VINTAGE PAPER CHASE
by Mark Seifert & William Christensen

097 SPECULATOR CORNER: HOT COMICS = CASH!
by Rich Johnston

099 PRICE GUIDE
for Collectors and Sellers

104 BLEEDING COOL DIRECTORY
Retailer List

Bleeding Cool Online

Daily news and opinions about comics, TV, and film: **bleedingcool.com**
Contact: **bleedingcool.com/contact**
Forums: **bleedingcool.com/forums**

Bleeding Cool Staff

William Christensen: Publisher
Mark Seifert: Creative Director
Jim Kuhoric: Editor-In-Chief
Ariana Osborne: Lead Designer
Richard Johnston: Head Writer
Rick Verbanas: Staff Writer
Brendon Connelly: Staff Writer
Gavin Lees: Contributing Writer
Rich Handley: Contributing Writer
Chris Arrant: Contributing Writer
Keith Davidsen: Contributing Writer
David Marks: Director of Events

All images contained within are TM and ©2013 their respective owners. All rights reserved. Please direct editorial and retailer inquiries and contributions to Jim Kuhoric: jimkuhoric@bleedingcool.com. Inquiries regarding advertising in Bleeding Cool Magazine or Online should be directed to jimkuhoric@bleedingcool.com. Any statements made, expressed or implied, in Bleeding Cool Magazine are the opinions of columnists or persons being interviewed and do not represent the position of the publisher.
Printed in Canada.

Next Issue:
See Inside Back Cover for Details!

Bleeding Cool Magazine Issue #3.
March 2013.
Published by Avatar Press, Inc. 515 N. Century Blvd. Rantoul, IL 61866. ©2012 Avatar Press, Inc.

LIFE IN THE GUTTERS
By Rich Johnston

When Gail Simone was rehired on *Batgirl* by DC Comics after being fired a week previously, it reminded me of a couple of past examples I'd heard. And both included Mark Waid.

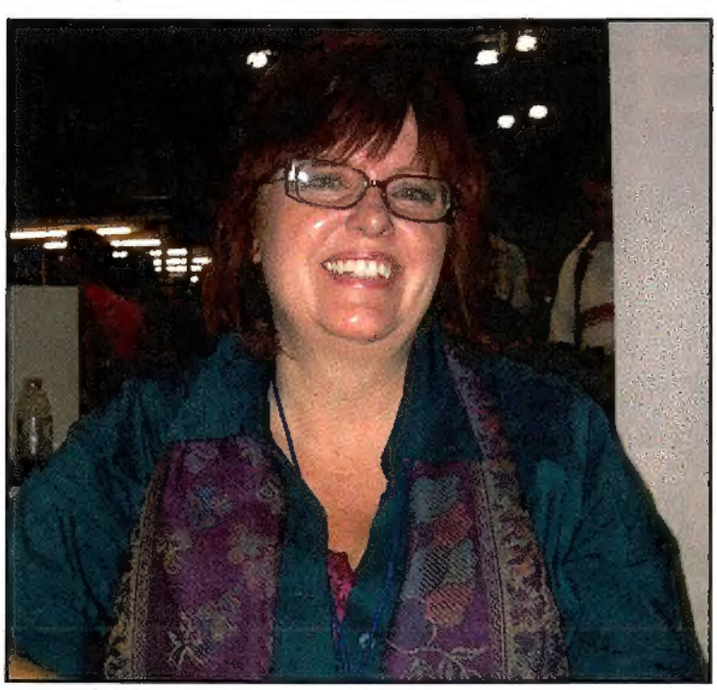
The first was in 2003, when Marvel Comics' EVP Bill Jemas decided to fire Waid and Mike Weiringo from *Fantastic Four*, when Waid declined to write the book as he described as a "suburban dramedy." Jemas hired playwright Roberto Aguirre-Sacasa to take the book on. There was internet outrage and within weeks the situation had been reversed and Waid and Wieringo were back on the comic.

The second was James Robinson being fired off *Superman* by Dan DiDio over... let's call them personal issues. Instantly, DiDio called Mark Waid and offered him the *Superman* comic. This was the title Mark Waid had always wanted to write but never had the chance. Indeed, after an aborted pitch process by Waid, Grant Morrison, Mark Millar and Tom Peyer that was embroiled in office politics, Waid was told by then-President and Publisher Paul Levitz that he would specifically never be allowed to write a Superman monthly comic at DC. The offer by DiDio was a tremendous volte-face... but then, for whatever reason, legal, ethical, or contractual, DiDio was advised that he had to rehire Robinson on the book a few days later. DiDio told Waid he would make it up to him, but Waid, after being high on life for those few days, chose never to work with DC again.

I wonder what will happen with *Batgirl* fill-in writer Ray Fawkes now? And *Batgirl* artist Ed Benes seems to have retired from comics as a result of all this. History can teach us much in comics, as it has a tendency to repeat. But sometimes people learn.

In the nineties, part of the reason for the massive crash in the comics industry was the collapse of the speculator market, as publishers started to set print runs to cater for collectors who would store longboxes of individual comics away in the belief they would go up in value. This market was goosed by various multiple covers, cover enhancements, anything to shine a spotlight upon them. When this tulip bubble burst, it took much of comics with it.

Of late, it seemed that things might have been starting to overheat again, with Marvel NOW! books launching with double digit variant covers and DC increasing their



Gail Simone: Photo by Luigi Novi

Dan DiDio: Photo by Luigi Novi

incentive cover format across the line. And there were signs that publishers and retailers alike were starting to rely on the income these schemes brought. But the kind of people who do collect these things were saying, "Enough!" and were ready to abandon them all together.

But on the brink, just after DC announced over fifty variant covers for *Justice League of America #1*, they pulled back. DC decided to restrict the number of variant covers they are putting out, and Marvel also decided not to launch any more books with quite as many covers as they did with *Uncanny Avengers*. This may have helped to settle things down. For the comics market, historically, this is a remarkable exercise in restraint and bodes well...

It looks like we're coming to the end of the Siegel/Shuster fights with Warners (appeals notwithstanding), but there is still a belief that such contracts as they signed are things of the past. No longer could Bill Finger get ripped off, no longer could Jack Kirby not receive a penny from *Avengers*. No longer could Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons sign a creator-owned contract only to find it wasn't. But that's not true; companies right now sign work-for-hire back-end deals, others set creator against creator to fight for the rights, and reputations suffer as a result.

So, why am I suddenly obsessed with history? Well, I've been rereading *Marvel Comics: The Untold Story* by Sean Howe. I realise just how important getting this kind of thing into print is.

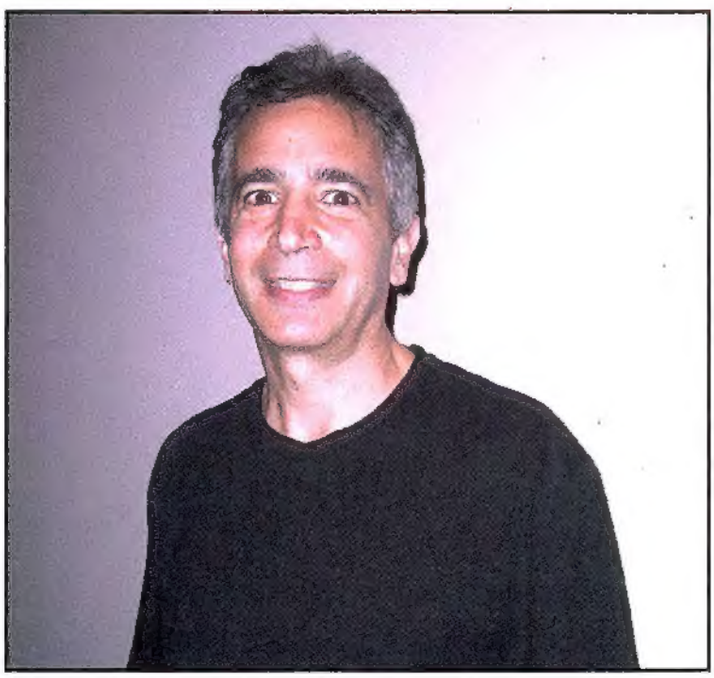
Which is why this magazine features a forgotten history of comics, the books that only exist as a pitch proposal, character designs, initial stabs at pages and fully completed graphic novels by the industry's hottest names, sitting in publisher drawers.

Film calls the list of the best unproduced screenplays "The Black List." So, naturally, mine has to be called The Black Bolt List. Find it elsewhere in this issue...

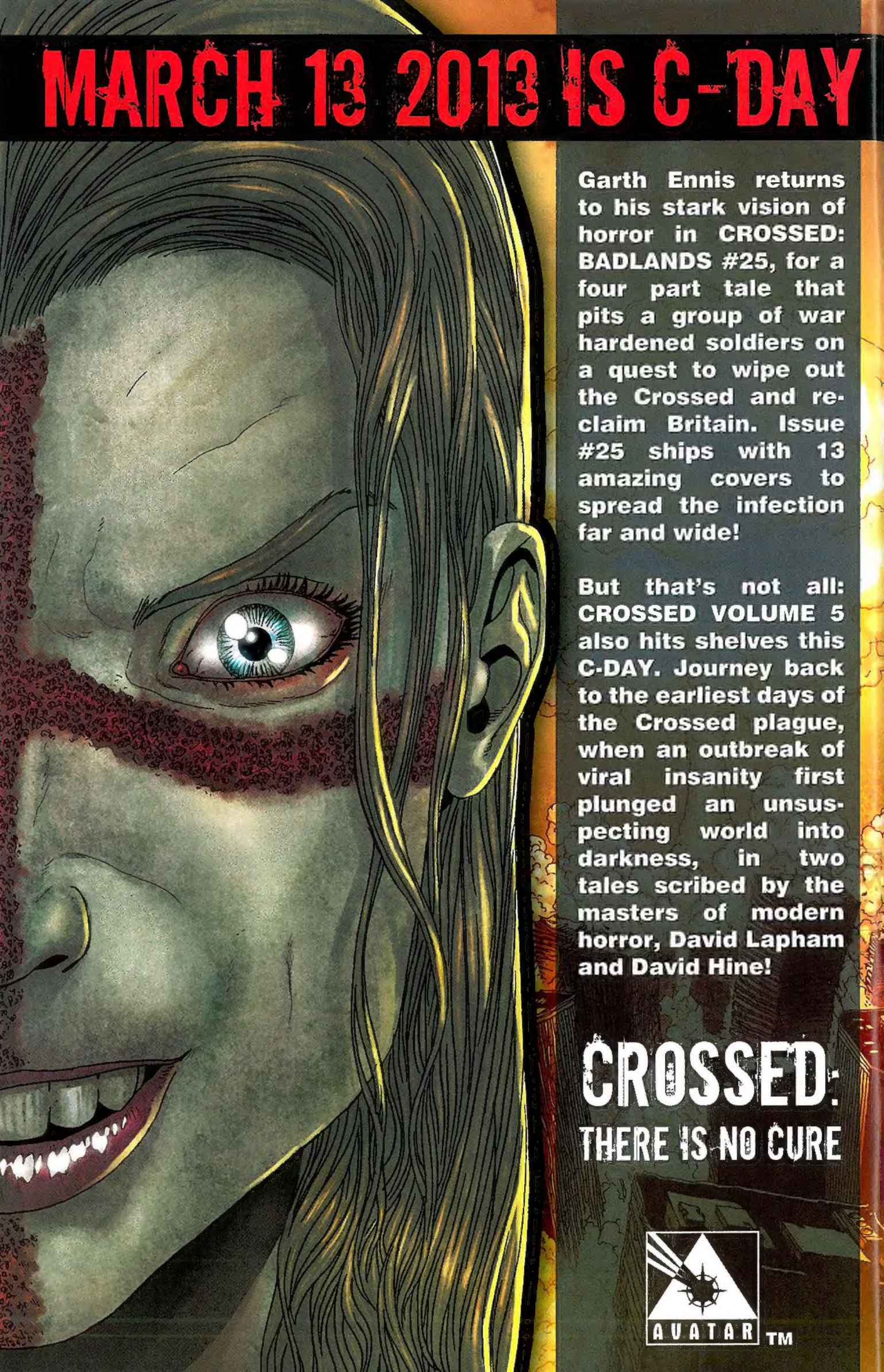
Got a tip for Rich? You can contact him, or any Bleeding Cool contributor, with story tips, comments, questions, or to ask about advertising at: ***BleedingCool.com/contact***

At the top of each article in Bleeding Cool Magazine, you'll find a shortURL that will take you to the online hub for that topic. You can use that link to share with your friends, or to join in the conversation at the Bleeding Cool online discussion forum:
BleedingCool.com/forums

Mark Waid: Photo by Luigi Novi

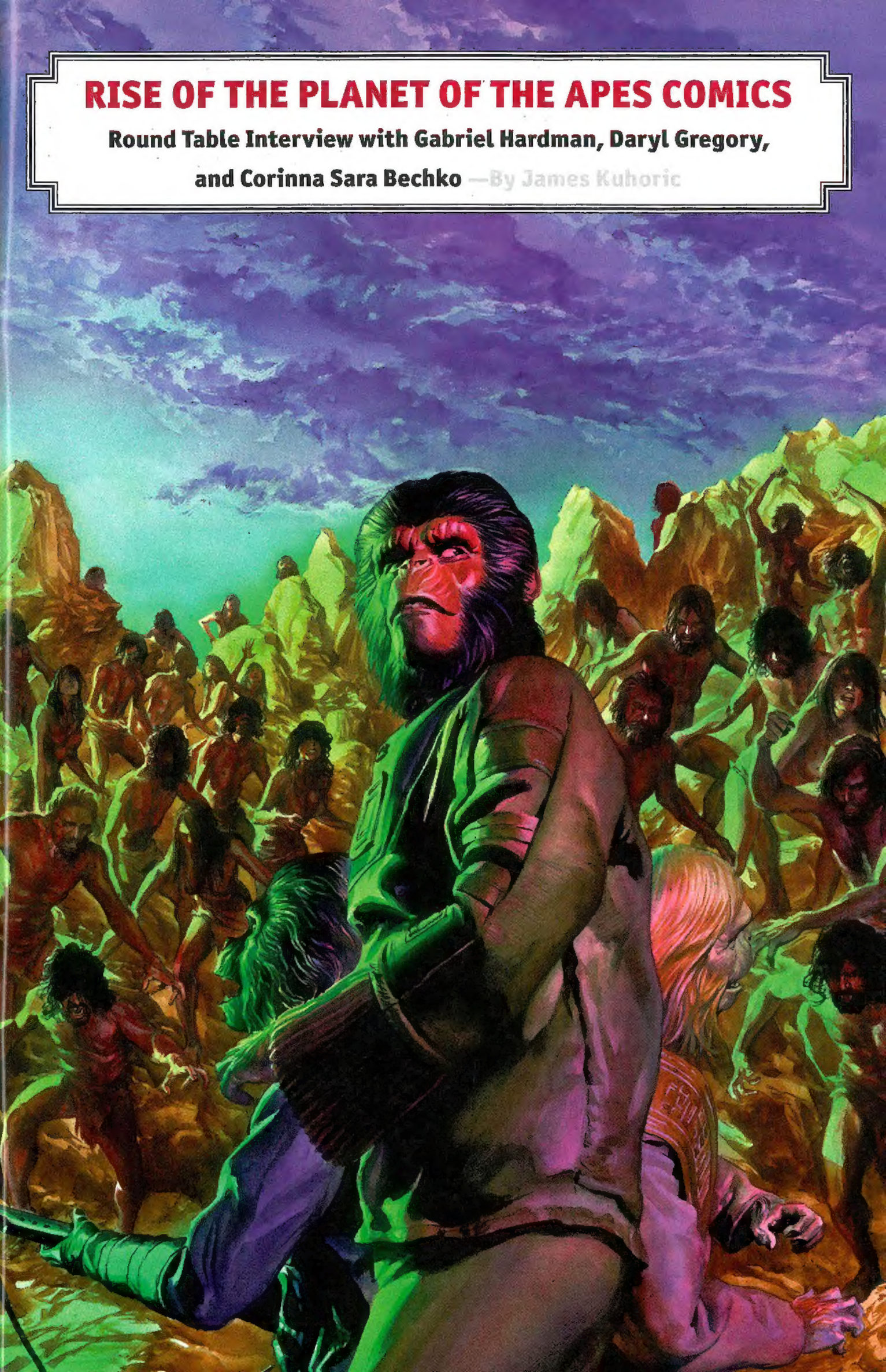


Bill Jemas: Photo by Luigi Novi


MARCH 13 2013 IS C-DAY
Garth Ennis returns to his stark vision of horror in CROSSED: BADLANDS #25, for a four part tale that pits a group of war hardened soldiers on a quest to wipe out the Crossed and reclaim Britain. Issue #25 ships with 13 amazing covers to spread the infection far and wide!
But that's not all: CROSSED VOLUME 5 also hits shelves this C-DAY. Journey back to the earliest days of the Crossed plague, when an outbreak of viral insanity first plunged an unsuspecting world into darkness, in two tales scribed by the masters of modern horror, David Lapham and David Hine!
CROSSED:
THERE IS NO CURE
AVATAR
TM

RISE OF THE PLANET OF THE APES COMICS

Round Table Interview with Gabriel Hardman, Daryl Gregory, and Corinna Sara Bechko —By James Kuhoric



http://bcool.bz/bcm3-apes

RISE OF THE PLANET OF THE APES COMICS

by James Kuhoric

When the *Planet of the Apes* movie debuted in 1968, it defined both the era and a new high point for science fiction. With groundbreaking special effects and an avant-garde score that truly brought the future world of the apes to life, the movie would go on to spawn four sequels up to 1973, a short lived television series, a 2001 remake, and a 2011 reboot with a sequel in the works. The social commentary of the films would make a lasting impression on moviegoers, critics, and our general consciousness for years to come.

Like the longevity of the movie from whence it came, POTA would enjoy a long and colorful expansion of the universe through comic books; beginning with adaptations and extending into series which developed the characters and concepts beyond the scope of their film inspiration. While there were movie adaptations from Gold Key and some obscure Japanese manga, it was Marvel Comics that mastered the translation to comics with their *Planet of the Apes Magazine* and *Adventures on the Planet of the Apes* comic series. These publications would allow creators like Gerry Conway, Doug Moench, Mike Esposito, George Tuska, and Mike Ploog to add to the rich universe with their own extended stories. After the Marvel run of the 70s, Malibu would enjoy a successful run of POTA comics that also developed one of the early crossover universes when they created *Ape Nation*, which would pit the apes against the Newcomers from *Alien Nation*. Others would step up to try their paws at the Apes franchise, but success was a fleeting thing and it seemed that perhaps the apes days had come and gone.

But in 2011, BOOM! Studios would launch a new ongoing *Planet of the Apes* comic line that looked past the failed 2001

THEY CALL THEM THE LOVERS. THE SPIRIT OF APE CITY AND THE QUEEN OF THE WEST.
CROSSING THE CONTINENT AT THE HEIGHT OF LUXURY, IN COMPLETE COMFORT...
CAPTAIN! I THINK YOU SHOULD SEE THIS.
? THAT'S CULOUS.
'RE IN IDDLE OF WHERE!

movie and harkened back to what made the original series and comics successful over thirty years ago. Recruiting novelist Daryl Gregory and artist Carlos Mango, the magic was recaptured and fans who craved a return to the glory days of the apes were rewarded with the first of several new comics. Set 20 years before the original movie, the books were punctuated with fantastic art that seemed to capture the very essence of the 1968 film and told of an epic struggle that would define the landscape to come in this amazing universe. The critical fan reception would facilitate two additional series – *Betrayal of the Planet of the Apes* and *Planet of the Apes Cataclysm* - both featuring the writing of Corinna Sara Bechko and incredible art of Gabriel Hardman.

We had an opportunity to sit down with three of the architects of the *Planet of the Apes* series to find out from the source what their inspirations and goals are in keeping these pivotal comics fresh and relevant. What transpired was an intellectual discussion about the motivations and future of the comics... with nary a "get your stinking paws off me you damned dirty ape" quote.

Gabriel Hardman: Since *Planet of the Apes* is explicitly an allegorical story, in fact there are many who argue that allegory is what all of science fiction does best, what was your initial real world inspiration when you set out to write your first *POTA* arc?

Daryl Gregory: Who are these people arguing that? Show them to me! I would like to fight them, but only on a metaphorical level.

The *POTA* movies are pretty allegorical, though. They wear their political hearts on their sleeves, which is part of their charm. Of course, when I first started watching these movies as a kid, what they meant was beyond me -- I just wanted to see apes on horses. But then you get a little older and

see that the movies are talking about the issues of the day, in pretty bald metaphors.

When I first started writing *POTA*, I decided to honor that tradition and write an overtly political story about the issues that we're concerned with today. I'm interested in extremism, terrorism, and the lengths we go to protect national security, so when I started writing I was thinking about that Barry Goldwater line about "extremism in the defense of liberty is no vice." I was certainly thinking of real-world situations. Anybody looking for allegories in my *POTA* run can look at what's happening with "the war on terror," and the Palestinian conflict.

But allegory only takes you so far. Fiction that sticks too rigidly to a predetermined scheme is pretty dull stuff. At a certain point, you have to abandon you best-laid plans, get out of the way of the characters, and tell the story.

GH So in your stories so far, was there a point where you had an allegory in mind, but then the characters took off in directions that surprised you? I'm really interested in how you two work this stuff out as a team. Do you have story fights?

Corinna Sara Bechko: Personally, I've always been fascinated by the way that politics try to control science. Facts are facts, but when they don't fit the slogans something has to break. *POTA* is a great place to explore that theme, but that can't be the only narrative driver. When we started working on the first arc of *POTA: Cataclysm*, we were thinking of how environmental disasters usually disproportionately affect less advantaged people. But once our characters started interacting with that structure, things went in a bit of a different direction.

When we work out a story, we usually agree on what it's "about" first. From there we refine what will happen, but we find that having a theme helps keep us on

track. I wouldn't say we have actual story fights, but we do spend a lot of time hashing things out. Usually it's a process of whittling away extraneous ideas since we both have a tendency to become fascinated by minor background characters and there's just not enough room to tell everyone's story in 22 pages.

But then again, Gabriel might have a different take. Do you, Gabriel?

GH That's correct. We're co-writers and we're married so we don't have story fights, we have story DISCUSSIONS.

On the subject of allegory: under normal circumstances I would say, "If you want to send a message, go to Western Union." Because I'm skeptical of stories with very overt messages and I live in the 1930's.

But *Planet of the Apes* is a pre-established world with rules. POTA stories have an overt social component to them. If you're not telling that kind of story, I don't think you're really telling a POTA story. I think it's important to stay true to that.

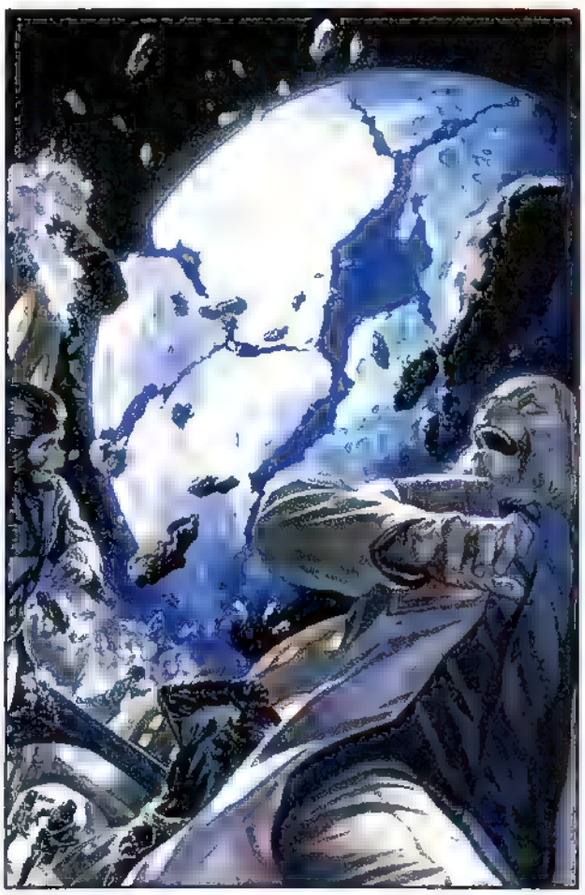
CSB Speaking of social components, I loved the mix of characters in your *POTA* right from the start, Daryl. Putting a tough, smart, pregnant human front and center was a really bold move in my opinion. How did you make that choice?

DG Heh. I think it was orneriness. When I was talking over the pitch for the series with then editor Ian Brill, one thing we both agreed on was that POTA had had enough time-traveling, male, shirtless astronauts. And I was struck by the fact that there were so few strong human females in POTA's universe (I can only think of one), and a single female chimpanzee. It seemed oddly limiting for a series that, as Gabriel points out, is supposed to have a strong social component. Plus, I think it was my frustration with comics in general. Where

were the strong women?

I have to admit that when I said that I wanted the two main characters to be sisters, and one of them would start as six months pregnant, and the first year would climax with a combination birth scene / terrorist attack... well, I was surprised as anyone when BOOM! said to go for it.

But I think starting out, with so many unfamiliar characters not from the movies, is also a stretch for a lot of fans. One thing I've really enjoyed about the books you two are doing is that I get to see our old friends, especially Zira. Was there any one character you really wanted to get your hands on, and say something about?



CSB I guess I'm an oddball type of fan, because I like seeing new characters. Exploring a familiar universe from a fresh perspective is exciting!

That said, my favorite character from the original *POTA* actually is Zira, for exactly the reasons you mention. I'm thrilled that we're getting to weave her into our tale. It's a little bit intimidating though, since I really want to make sure we get her right. She's such an iconoclast in the film, unlike most of the other apes, so we figured she must have had a real struggle in her past that she was able to emerge from through sheer strength of will.

Gabriel, what's your take?

GH Well, we didn't initially set out to tell stories about the familiar POTA characters. Dr. Zaius was the only major established character in our first arc, *Betrayal*. We had set that series 20 years prior to the first movie so that the look and feel of the book would fit with the films, but we introduced new characters to give the story stakes. Not knowing whether characters will live or die is important for creating suspense in this kind of pulp adventure. As we moved forward with our stories and got closer in time to the first movie, it was natural to bring in those familiar characters. Now the challenge is to create suspense when the reader knows that a few years down the line, not only will Taylor arrive but the world will end.

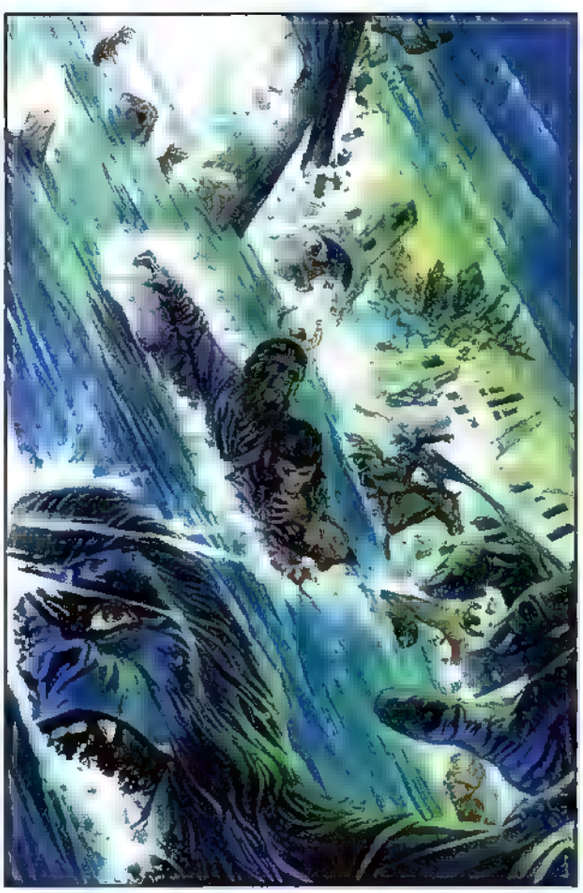
Daryl, your background as a novelist is very apparent in the textured, layered world you created in your book (along with artist Carlos Magno). I come from working in movies and frequently have ideas that I know would work in a film but wouldn't play in a comic. Are you ever frustrated by ideas for your comics stories that would only work in a novel?

DG That layered feel owes so much to Carlos. He stuffs so much information into the frame – down to buttons on the clothes, curlicues on each gun and dagger blade, weird details in the architecture and vehicles... you just feel like you're immersed in a new world. In one script I mentioned a baby bottle and he created this beautiful, baroque art object that was like something Leonardo DaVinci would have been weaned on. So, as we went on, I found myself writing shorter and shorter panel descriptions. I could just write "We're in a street in the city" and he would go nuts. His battle scenes are ridiculous.

What was your question? Oh yeah – do

I get frustrated when the ideas don't match the medium? Weirdly, that doesn't happen as much as I thought it would when I first started writing comics. I think I put on my comics hat, and my brain comes up with comics-appropriate ideas. It's a visual medium, so I end up thinking in panels. The same thing happens when I'm working on short stories – the ideas just come in more compact shape.

But I must admit, that *POTA* is a special case, because it's science fiction, and so it's about ideas as well as action, and comics are just so damned short! I have so many more notes about the economy, about the social structures in the city, about what's going on elsewhere in the world, but I don't have the room to go into them! The plot must power forward. I've been tempted to write a few Alan Moore-style text appendixes, just to get the information across. But, for now, all I can hope for is that the readers somehow sense that there's a lot more below the surface.



I think in your Apes books you two have struck a graceful balance. There's plenty of action, but there are some great scenes where the dialogue is the action, like those early scenes where young Dr. Zaius butts heads with his conservative superiors. Just great.

Since we're running out of time, let's talk about what's next. For me, I'm finishing up my run on *POTA* with three more giant-sized issues. The novelist in me is very happy to have the chance to pay off plot lines that started in issue 1. I'll get to make a few final thematic points and bring things to what I hope feels like a satisfyingly epic conclusion. So what are you two planning? In your series, is there a place you want to get to before Taylor arrives?

CSB I can't wait to read those giant-sized issues! The scope of the story you've set up is immense. And if you did ever write text appendixes I would happily read those too. I've loved discovering how things work in your *POTA*. You make that world seem so big.

As to our series, we do have long-term arcs figured out for our major characters, getting them to the places they are, and more importantly, their preconceptions, by the time Taylor arrives. There are also a lot of odd little things hinted at in the films that are never explained. For instance, why do the gorillas suddenly become so intent on war in the second film? What's happened to their cropland that it won't feed what seems to be a relatively small community? Ape City had obviously had some pretty serious social upheavals before Zira discovers Taylor. We hope to explore more of that too. Am I leaving anything out, Gabriel?

GH While we do have big plans that lead up to the first and second movie, we're also very conscious of making each arc a fairly self contained story. This approach has let us explore the POTA world through the lens of different genres such as conspiracy thriller, revolutionary war, disaster and our most recent arc is a bit of a horror story. There are a lot of interesting ways to explore this world as long as we stay true to the POTA ethos. Also... Barry Goldwater.

THIRD EYE COMICS

FOLLOW US

WWW.THIRDEYECOMICS.COM

MARYLAMD'S COMIC BOOK SUPER STORES

TWO GREAT LOCATIONS

ANNAPOLIS

2027A WEST ST
ANNAPOLIS, MD 21401
410-897-0322

SOUTHERN MD

78 SOLOMONS ISL RD
PRINCE FREDERICK, MD 20678
443-968-2385

COMICS*GRAPHIC NOVELS*TOYS*APPAREL*SUPPLIES
NOVELTIES*SUBSCRIPTION SERVICES*MANGA

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK!
M-F: 11AM-9PM, SAT: 11AM-8PM,
SUN: 11AM-6PM

THE DOCTOR IS IN

By *Gavin Lees*

THE DOCTOR IS IN

by Gavin Lees

Following the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, reportage of the event disrupted television schedules around the globe. Across the Atlantic, Britain's BBC were forced to delay their evening programming, due to an extended evening news, and push back the broadcast of a new science-fiction series. This was the 23rd November, 1963, and the show was *Doctor Who*. It was no less portentous a debut than the show deserved, as it has gone on to become the longest-running science fiction series on television, and a cornerstone not only of cultdom, but of the very idea of Britishness.

That inauspicious first episode introduced audiences to the Doctor — a cranky, eccentric and slightly threatening old man; played by veteran character actor William Hartnell. It is revealed that he is a time-travelling alien — apparently a fugitive — who is accompanied by his granddaughter, Susan. When Susan's schoolteachers become curious about her behavior, they follow her to her home, which appears to be a police callbox. They enter, only to find that the box is bigger on the inside and is, in fact, a space ship: the TARDIS (Time And Relative Dimensions In Space.) Furious at the intrusion, and desperate to keep his secret, the Doctor transports them all to the Stone Age, establishing the narrative drive for the initial story, and also the formula for the series as a whole.

Those early episodes were typical of British TV serials, with a slow, ponderous pace and woefully low production values. Without a large budget, though, the show's producers were forced to be ever more experimental and inventive in their approach to Doctor Who's futuristic demands. The distinctive "time vortex" of the opening credits was created by simply shining a flashlight on a camera monitor and generating a visual feedback loop. Similarly, its futuristic title music, composed by Ron Grainer, was realized by Delia Derbyshire of

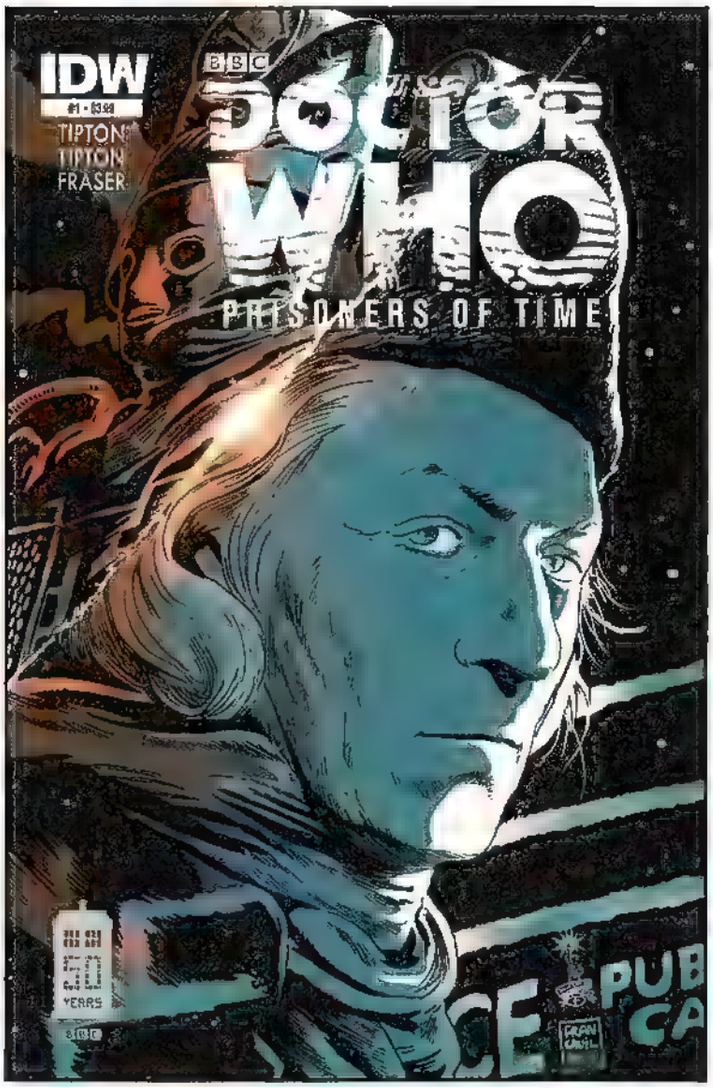
the BBC's legendary Radiophonic Workshop. Using *musique concrète* principles, she hand-assembled tape loops of plucked strings and utilized audio oscillators and filters to create a primitive sound synthesizer, prefiguring her later influential work as part of the band, White Noise.

It was that rag-tag spirit that came to characterize the aesthetic of *Doctor Who* which, until the '80s, operated with a special-effects budget of around £100 per episode and often employed common household objects in its settings and props. Items as common as sink plungers became futuristic weapons, and TV remote controls were alien computers.

The initial response to *Who* was an unqualified success, and the BBC decided to greenlight further serials, but with the caveat that it stay clear of the "bug-eyed monsters" that populated other sci-fi of the day. With only one script to work from, "The Mutants" by Terry Nation, which featured a whole race of bug-eyed monsters, the producers were forced to sanction some hasty re-writes and the villains became the cybernetic Daleks. The Doctor now had his arch-enemies and they sent generations of children hiding behind their couches in terror.

Although the format of the show remained consistent — the Doctor and his companion(s) travel to a new time and location to right wrongs, usually encountering one of the stock of rotating villains — the lead character did not. Hartnell's failing health, and his friction with the crew on-set led him to leave the show in 1966. In a further stroke of ingenuity, producer Innes Lloyd hit upon the idea having the Doctor regenerate into a new actor. So, Hartnell personally chose Patrick Troughton as his successor and, in "The Tenth Planet," handed the role over in an on-screen transformation.

With Troughton came a more swashbuckling side to the character as well as a change in appearance and mannerisms to mimic Charlie Chaplin's tramp. With each successive change came this David Bowie-like reinvention, each actor fashioning the Doctor with their own idiosyncrasies: Jon Pertwee's cosmic dandy, Tom Baker's bewildered eccentric (frequently voted as the fan-favourite of all incarnations,) Peter Davidson's Oxonian fop, Colin Baker's arch sass, and Sylvester McCoy's manipulative Caledonian rogue. Each still contained the core of the character, while the often unexpected quirks gave The Doctor that positively alien quality, but also kept him in the tradition of the loveable oddball — an archetype that informs much of British humour, and its natural confluence into science-fiction in *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*.



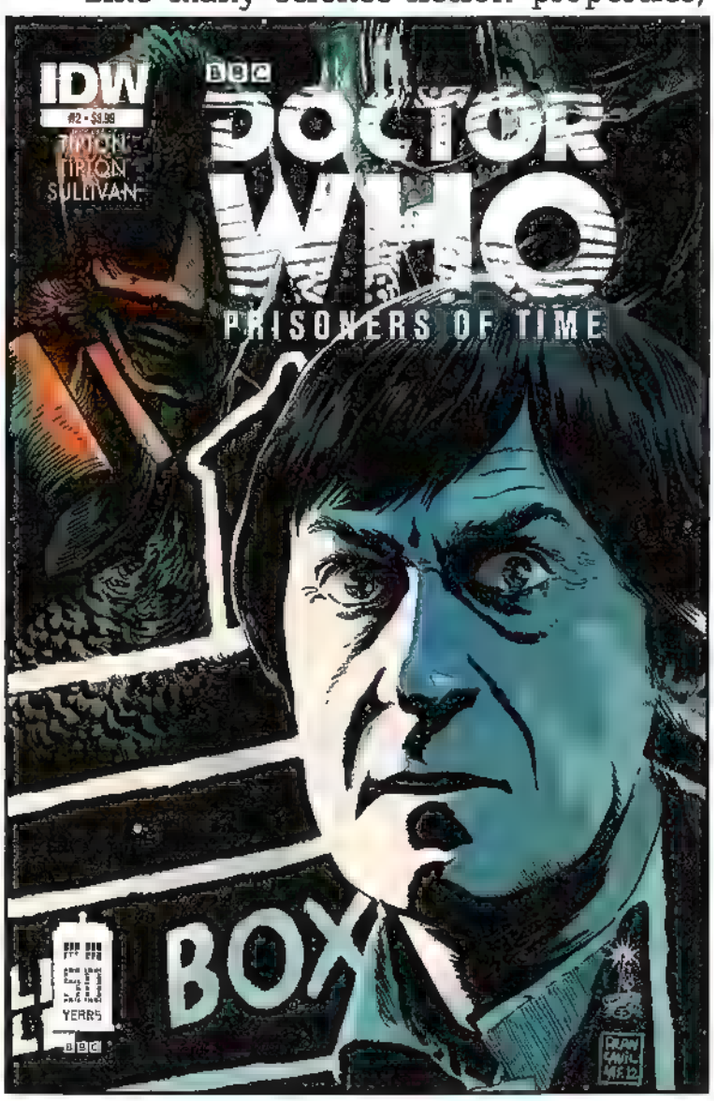
However, to the end of McCoy's tenure, the frequent changes in timeslots, and last-ditch effort to change *Doctor Who* from a light-hearted child-friendly programme, to one with a darker edge, seemed to knell the end of the series. Indeed, in 1990, at the end of the show's 26th season, citing falling viewership, the BBC decided not to recommission any further series. The show was dead in the water.

The BBC hoped that an independent production company would be able to revitalize the property and lead to success in the all-important American market. Until then, *Who* had been not much more than an underground cult affair in the USA — it's less-than slick production values and typically down-to-earth British sensibilities proved difficult for American audiences, who were used to the sheen and glamour of *Star Trek* and *Buck Rogers*. It was thus that the BBC began to entertain proposals from Hollywood and US television companies.

For a time, we came frighteningly close to having a US-based show with David Hasselhoff at the helm of the TARDIS. Thankfully, negotiations took a different track and, in 1996, a television movie of *Doctor Who* reached our screens, with Paul McGann as a very safe, homogenized Doctor. Predictably popular with the British audience, it once again failed to ignite any interest across the Atlantic and the show returned to hibernation.

However, in 2003, the BBC announced the revival of the show, with its own in-house production team. In 2005, the new *Doctor Who* arrived. Produced by Russell T. Davies, and with a bankable star — Christopher Eccleston — in the lead role, it proved a runaway hit, on both sides of the ocean this time. This revived Doctor has gone through two subsequent regenerations as David Tennant (in the longest run as the character since Tom Baker) and Matt Smith.

Like many science-fiction properties,



Doctor Who has been spun-off into several other media — novels, radio plays, video games, and, of course, comics. The British were very much ahead of the trans-media trend and had been publishing TV-spin-off comics since the '50s in the imaginatively-titled *TV Comic*. So, almost as soon as he hit the air, The Doctor has his adventures continue on the paneled page.

The transition to comics seemed very natural for *Doctor Who*, given the time-travelling nature of the character, which allowed the comics to stay within the canon, while side-stepping the continuity of the show itself. Also, unlike other sci-fi shows, which had overarching storylines or rigid, editorialized styles, *Who* was always more pliable and open to reinterpretation.

In the late '70s, The Doctor began to have his comic stories published in *Doctor Who Magazine*. Initially edited by Dez Skinn (of the legendary *Warrior* magazine,) his keen eye for talent led the magazine

to become an outlet for rising stars of UK comics. Indeed, a quick skim of the credits reads like a Who's Who (all puns intended) of British talent: Alan Moore, Grant Morrison, Dave Gibbons, Steve Dillon, Mick McMahon, Pat Mills, John Wagner, Bryan Hitch, Roger Langridge, Nick Abazdis — the list goes on. As the TV show began to wane in the '80s, it was the comic that was really pushing *Who* in new, bold directions, and even when the show itself was cancelled, the comics continued.

With the rise in popularity of the re-vamped show in the 2000s, it was inevitable that American publishers would capitalize on that success to spin-off a new comics series. The first to do so was IDW who, in 2008, began to publish a new line of *Doctor Who* comics, set in the then-current continuity of the Tenth Doctor.

No doubt conscious of the national identity of The Doctor, they made the wise decision to establish a British cast of writers,

like Tony Lee, John Reppion and Leah Moore, Gary Russell and, even, Rich Johnson. The connection kept the underlying sensibilities of *Who* intact while also establishing a more freewheeling approach to the character, away from the continuity-heavy direction the television programme was taking. In an inspired move, the storyline "The Forgotten" featured The Doctor fighting off amnesia by relating stories from his previous incarnations to his companion, Martha Jones. This helps to cement the position of the series as part of the overarching *Doctor Who* canon, and also providing jumping-on cues for new readers/viewers looking to delve into the character's past.

With IDW's position as licensed-publisher of other media properties, they have been able to now properly induct The Doctor into the American pantheon of science fiction with the latest mini-series which sees *Doctor Who* collide with *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. Obviously this was a landmine to tread, fearing the more than vocal reaction that these shows' fans can give. But, despite some initial misgivings, the series — written by David and Scott Tipton, with Tony Lee — has gone on to become both a critical and commercial success for the company.

With this momentum under them, the future looks bright for IDW's *Doctor Who*. As 2013 sees The Doctor's 50th anniversary, Andy Diggle continues his run on the ongoing comic, with Joshua Hale Fialkov stepping in for a two-issue arc, while the Tipton brothers return to write a twelve-part epic featuring every incarnation of The Doctor. It's part of a year-long celebration that only cements the character's status as one of the true icons of science fiction.

REVIVING THE HORROR GENRE

By *James Kuhoric*

http://bcool.bz/bcm3-horror

REVIVING THE HORROR GENRE

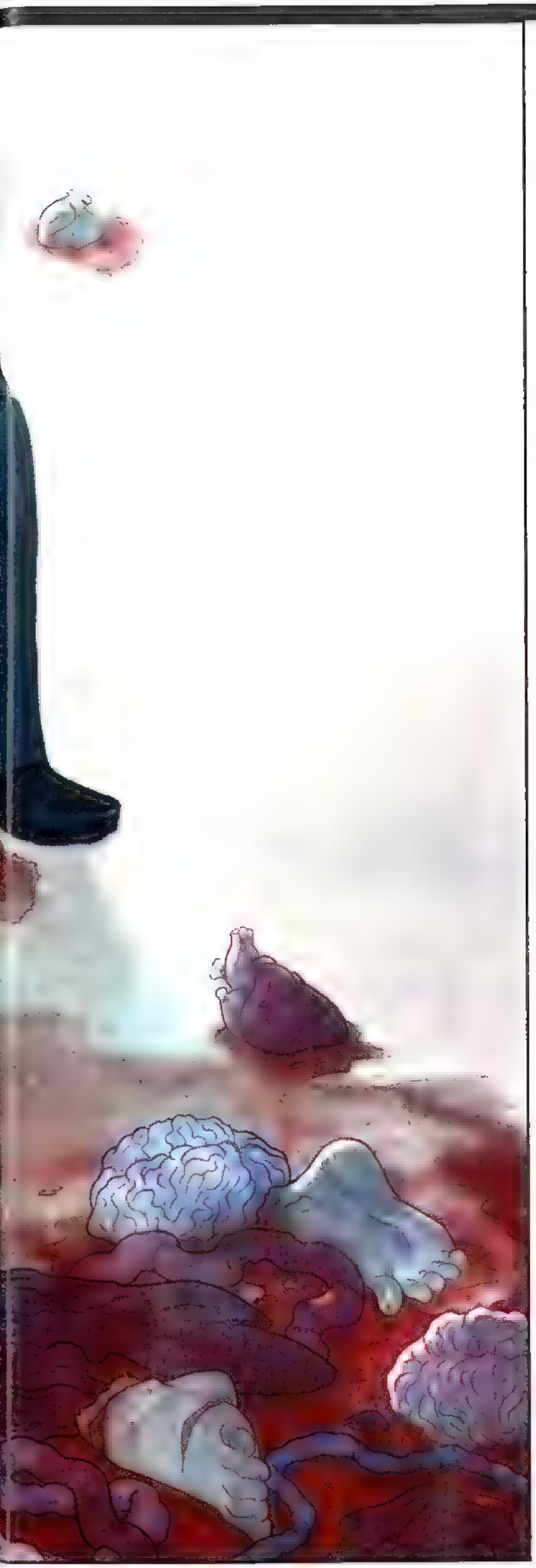
by James Kuhoric

Horror is in my blood. Always has been and always will be. I started a lifelong obsession with the genre which began with Riddley Scott's *Alien* and has been a dark part of my tastes and preferences ever since. Horror comics were some of the first that I went in search of alongside the standards of youth celebrating spandex and fantasy heroism. And I've read the gamut of the groundbreaking to the utterly soul crushingly stereotypical when it comes to today's horror comic offerings.

Horror is such a challenging genre, in that everything of the supernatural can be lumped into it, but so little of it is truly frightening. Most horror is full of the standard retreaded monster tropes and clichés that are so well worn they lack originality and even a spark of true ingenuity. It's a real challenge to find the gems in the genre, the books that stand out and deliver the sublime chill the masters can deliver. Authors like King, Hill, and Barker are the modern mainstays, delivering tales that take you out of your comfort zone and make you feel the uncomfortable lump in your stomach and the dread that whatever frights have led you to that point in the book, that the real horrors are yet to come.

That's what I wanted to experience in a comic. That sense of not knowing what was happening and feeling uncomfortable about getting to know the characters with that sense of dread over my head. I found it in the new series, *Revival*, published by Image Comics and written by long time horror creator Tim Seeley.

The core of the story is centered on an event in a small mid-western town where some of the recently dead have come back to life. But these aren't (seemingly) brain munching ghouls. They appear to be regular



folks that basically step off the slab and take up their old lives. With the world stage calling them "Revivers" and the government and CDC trying to contain what could be anything from a terrorist plot to the first tendrils of an epidemic, the stage is set for fear and hatred to create a powder keg in the sleepy burg of Wausau, Wisconsin. Reading the first five issues of the series, I was quickly caught up in the story and finding myself relating to the characters and developing empathy for what they were going through on both a micro and macro scale. Seeley really captures the personal problems of the main characters while they are stumbling through this seemingly biblical event. In fact, having branded the series genre as "rural noir," it seems Seeley has coined his own personal corner of the horror world and has created something so unique that others will surely attempt to replicate it.

When asked about his inspiration for the setting of *Revival*, Seeley pointed to his own roots as inspiration, "I grew up in the real Wausau, Wisconsin, and then moved to Chicago in my early 20s. I love the big city life, but I still have affection for my hometown, that also comes with a grown up understanding of what kind of 'dark underbelly' it had. I think Americans tend to believe that the small town sort of represents the best aspects of the American dream come to life. But that 'dark side' is part of any picturesque, rural American town. I really wanted to tell a story about what could make the dark side of a small town come to the surface."

Revival captures small town dread to a T. In fact the way that it unrolls both the scenic nature and personalities of its inhabitants are very reminiscent of strong HBO or Showtime original programming features. It is easy to read the first chapter and imagine the story coming to life on the big or small screens alongside programs like *Dexter* or *The Walking Dead*. Regarding

Who are the characters that make *Revival* so special? Meet them here:

Officer Dana Cypress

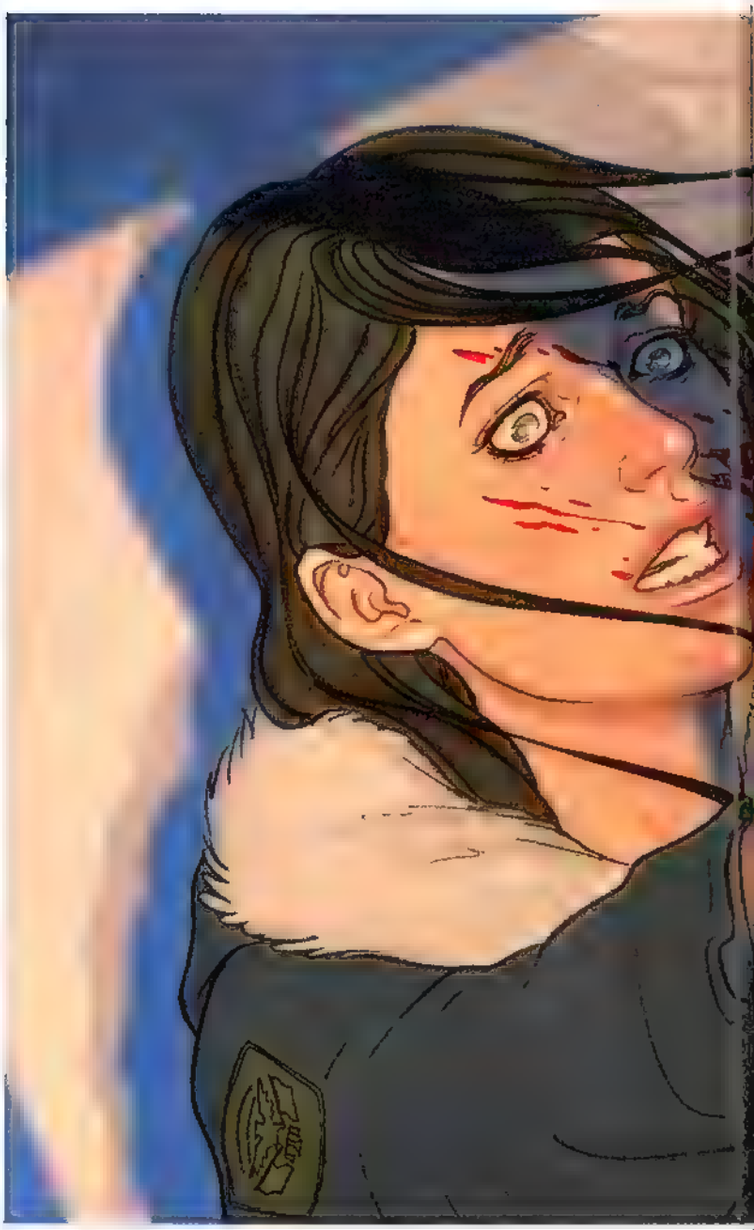
Dana is a single mother, police officer in a sleepy town, daughter of the sheriff and sister to Em Cypress. She has her share of problems: from raising a son on her own to living up to the expectations of an overbearing father who is also her superior officer. After being added to the "Revitalized Citizen Arbitration Team," she finds herself in a unique and uncomfortable position in the center of the Revivers phenomena.

Martha "Em" Cypress

Younger sister to Dana and black sheep of the family, Em is a troubled college student who finds herself discovering firsthand what it means to be revitalized. As Em struggles to understand what is happening to her, she becomes the focal point of a crazed maniac's attention.

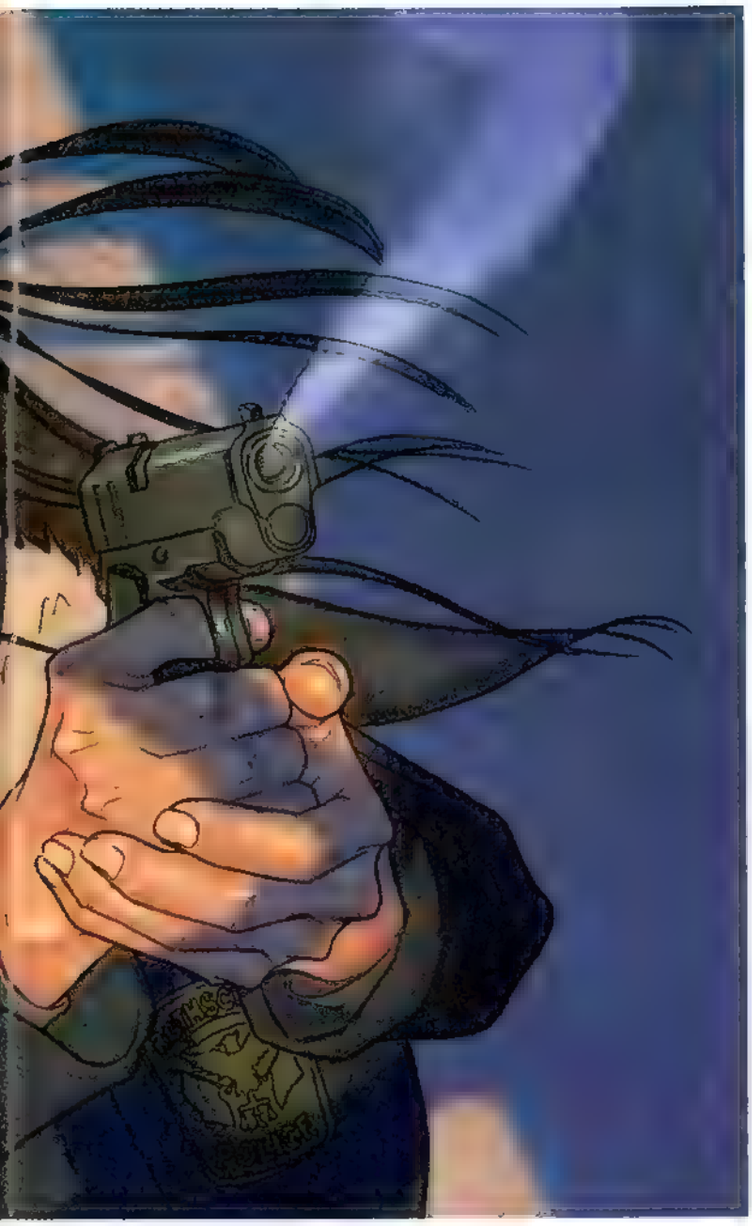
Sheriff Wayne Cypress

A hard man in a tough spot, the Sheriff is the patriarch of the Cypress family and has the world spotlight on his town where the Revival event took place. Now he's torn between keeping control of his sleepy hallow and not letting his family get torn apart by the unnerving events taking place around them.



the potential of bringing *Revival* to other medias, Seeley was adamant about focusing on making good comics first. "I've learned enough to know that you never, ever make a comic book because you want a TV show or a movie. If you want to make movies, go to LA, and make movies. BUT, I also know that if someone makes a good TV show or movie from your comic, it can sell you a lot of comics."

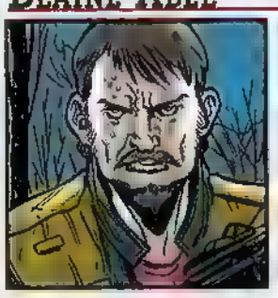
Some comic fans may be thinking that *Revival* is similar to Tim Seeley's other well-known creator owned title, *Hack / Slash*. You could not be further from the truth. *Hack / Slash* is a fun indulgence that goes to excess and enjoys that rare mix of horror and humor that made movies like *Evil Dead* cult favorites. Seeley admits that he has fun with the no holds barred antics of Cassie and Vlad, but *Revival* is a completely different beast.



Ibrahaim Ramin

The CDC liaison assigned to work with the police in keeping the quarantine around Wausau and getting to the bottom of the science behind the seemingly biblical events. Oddly unsure of himself and seemingly out of his league, Ibrahaim ends up partnered with Dana investigating incidents of Revival.

Blaine Abel



One part religious nutbag and one part trailer park conman, Mr. Abel is a self-proclaimed religious expert who has his own unique view of the Revived. A zealot with no boundaries or remorse, he is determined to deal with the demons of Wausau in his own way.

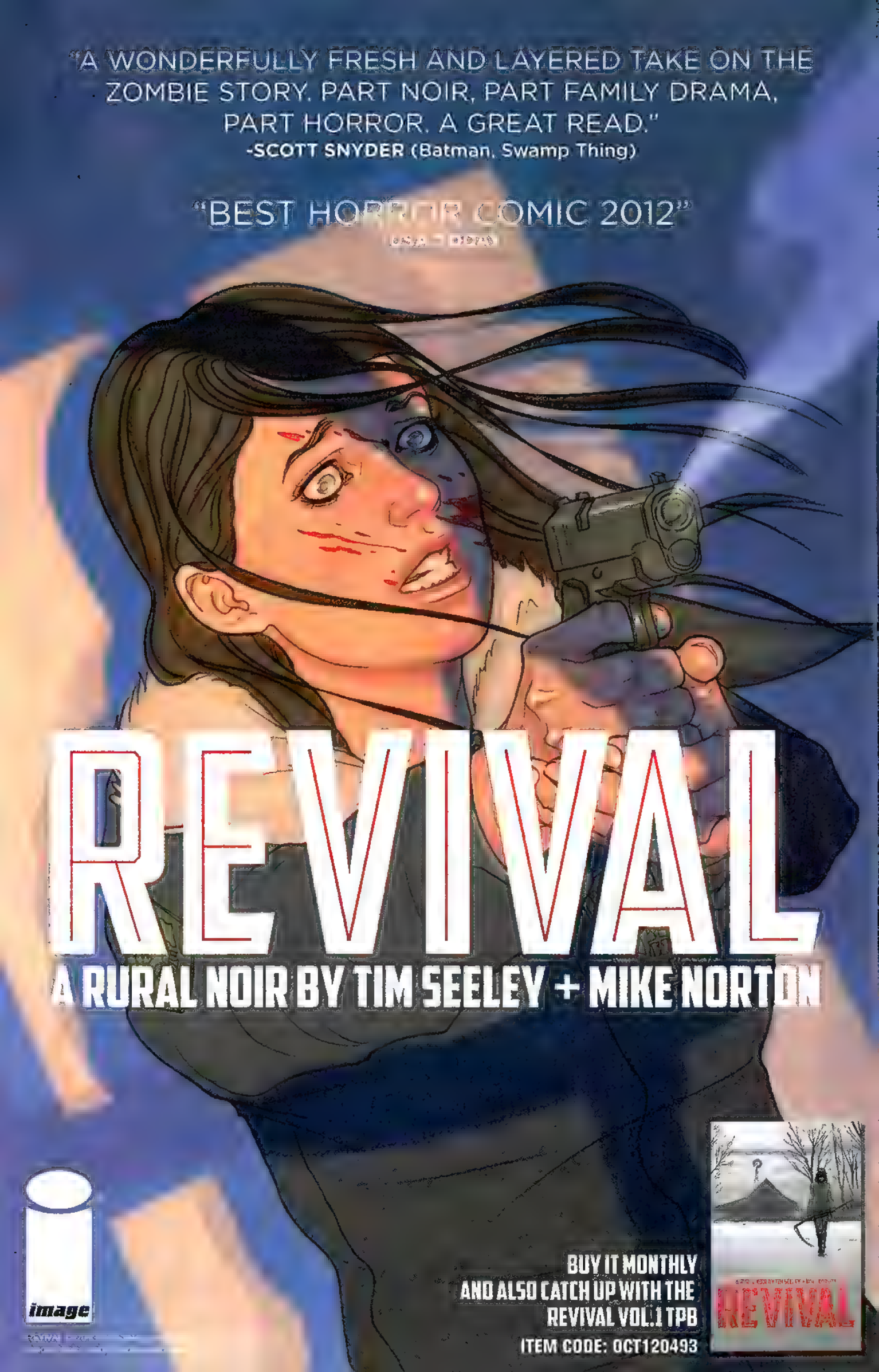
"*Hack/Slash* is, by design, exploitative. It revels in sex and violence, while making fun of the kind of stories that exploit it. *Revival* on the other hand, is a straight horror story. It takes itself seriously."

And a big part of making the mood for the series very serious and creepy is the art of Mike Norton. Within the first half dozen pages of *Revival #1,* you can feel that very surreal undertone starting to work on you. There's a subtle edge to the presentation that delivers frightening imagery and keeps you guessing about what is really going on and motivating the living and dead alike. Seeley admits the longtime friends had planned a project together for years and that *Revival* was the perfect opportunity to build something unique together. "Mike and I have worked together since the early days of Devil's Due Publishing. He was the graphic designer, I was the editor. So, for ten years, we always said we'd make something up together, because we like the same kind of comics, and we get along pretty well. We've kicked a few things around, but *Revival* was the idea that seemed to really get legs, and keep us really excited as we developed it. Mike isn't just the artist, he's the co-creator. This book is made up of 50% me, and 50% him!"

I'm a hard reader to please when it comes to horror. But *Revival* delivers. Between the slowly unfolding mystery of the Revivers, the interpersonal horrors of the characters, and the spot-on surreal and frightening imagery of the artwork, I am hooked. I hope we get to see more *Revival* and other new stories from this creative team. They get horror. So should you.

"A WONDERFULLY FRESH AND LAYERED TAKE ON THE ZOMBIE STORY. PART NOIR, PART FAMILY DRAMA, PART HORROR. A GREAT READ."
-**SCOTT SNYDER** (Batman, Swamp Thing)

"BEST HORROR COMIC 2012"



REVIVAL

A RURAL NOIR BY TIM SEELEY + MIKE NORTON

BUY IT MONTHLY
AND ALSO CATCH UP WITH THE
REVIVAL VOL.1 TPB
ITEM CODE: OCT120493

image

THE COMING OF HARBINGER WARS

Joshua Dysart and Duane Swierczynski Discuss What Valiant's First Crossover Will Mean for the Valiant Universe

By *Rick Verbanas*

THE COMING OF HARBINGER WARS

by Rick Verbanas

Valiant made a hugely successful return in 2012, re-launching beloved characters from the original Valiant Universe of the 1990s. They have slowly built a new universe, gradually introducing characters to one another. This April, Valiant will launch *Harbinger Wars*, their first crossover mini-series. Writers Joshua Dysart (*Harbinger*) and Duane Swierczynski (*Bloodshot*) are teaming together to bring fans a story that has been building for quite some time.

"We've been on this collision course literally from the opening scene of *Bloodshot* and from issue #2 of *Harbinger*," explained Dysart. "It's exciting to finally get to it." His writing partner for *Harbinger Wars* agrees. "These stories would eventually be colliding into each other, so it was a lot of fun to plant the seeds early on. In the case of *Bloodshot*, there's a huge clue planted on page one of the first issue," revealed Swierczynski.

But what is the story *Harbinger Wars* has been building to for the last year?

Project Rising Spirit, a clandestine, extra-governmental agency, is responsible for the creation of Bloodshot, a soldier brought back from the verge of death by revolutionary nanotechnology. *Harbinger Wars* will explore, however, that he isn't their only top secret experiment. Hidden from the public eye, PRS has also been hoarding an incredibly valuable resource – two-dozen super-powered children known as "harbingers" or "psiots."

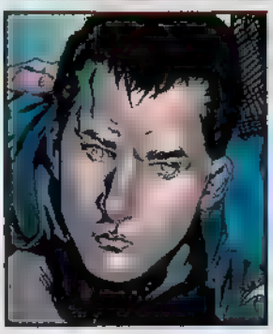
"Bloodshot came bombing into the PRS facility in Nevada, whipping ass like a honey badger," shares Dysart. "But what he did not expect to find was PRS' own psiot activation

program... and the fruit of that program. Children. Dangerous, dangerous children."

Empathizing with these captives, Bloodshot releases these dangerously powerful – and reckless - youths into the world.

"And, now, three of the most powerful men in the Valiant Universe want to collect them for their own purposes," added Dinesh Shamdasani, CCO of Valiant. "Famed philanthropist and secret zealot for the psiot cause, Toyo Harada, wants to recruit them and tighten his grip on the world. His former student, Peter Stanchek, wants the kids to help him take down Harada. And Bloodshot wants to redeem himself by making sure they never fall into the wrong hands again. But none of them might have figured that these children have plans of their own, and when the paths of all four cross, the Valiant Universe is going to have its first all-out, superhuman war."

PETER STANCHEK:



Born with an array of startling telekinetic powers, teenager Peter Stanchek was growing up the wrong way - on the run and self-medicating to survive. Then Toyo Harada, the enigmatic philanthropist and CEO of the Harbinger Foundation, revealed the true nature of Peter's rare omega-power: the potential to reshape human history. Peter was inducted into Harada's secret training academy for telekinetic youth, but soon discovered his new mentor's true objectives - conspiracy, subversion and world domination. Now, Peter is on the road again, recruiting an army of fellow telekinetics to bring down Harada's secret Harbinger empire one brick at a time.

THE RENEGADES:

Zephyr. Flamingo. Kris. Torque. Recruited and activated by their would-be leader, Peter Stanchek, the members of the Renegades were once destined for the ranks of the Harbinger Foundation, but instead elected to join Peter's quest to dismantle Harada's machinations across the world.

BLOODSHOT:

Resurrected by Project Rising Spirit and transfused with microscopic nanomachines, Bloodshot is the ultimate confluence of technology and military necessity. The nanites in his blood make him faster, stronger and harder to kill

than any ordinary soldier and enable him to control computerized systems at will. Mind-wiped and deployed as a top-secret "harbinger hunter" for his one-time masters in PRS, Bloodshot was recently freed from his programming and infiltrated PRS headquarters in search of his true identity.

PULSE:

Melissa Krajnak was kept prisoner for years within the Nursery, Project Rising Spirit's secret psiot prison. Codenamed Pulse for her ability to project electromagnetic pulses of enormous force, Melissa escaped and has joined Bloodshot, becoming his first ally in his ongoing mission to bring down Project Rising Spirit.

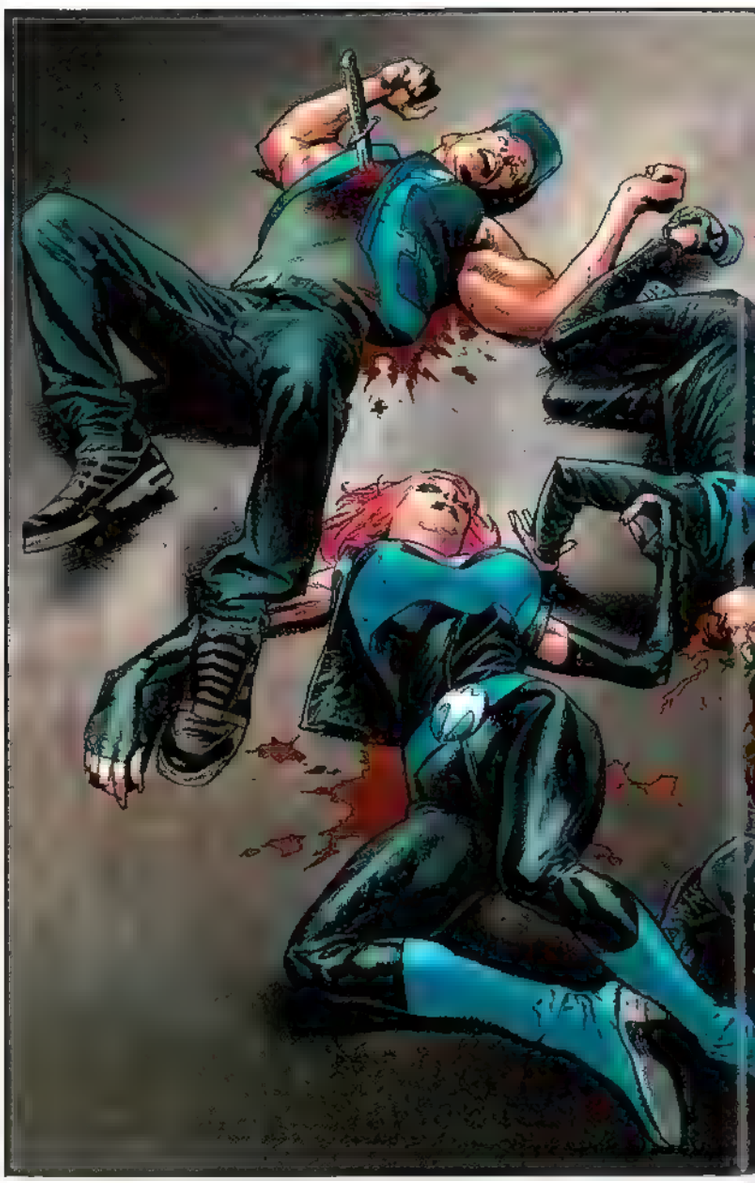
TOYO HARADA:

Once believed to be the most powerful psiot on Earth, Toyo Harada first discovered his latent telekinetic abilities in the aftermath of the atomic bombing of Hiroshima in 1945. Since that time, Harada has used his awe-inspiring abilities to read minds, warp reality and slow his own aging to their fullest extent, manipulating world leaders and building the worldwide business empire known as Harada Global Conglomerates for more than half a century. But, secretly, Harada has also been training psiots like himself within the Harbinger Foundation, building a private army to combat Project Rising Spirit and one day usher in a new world order.

"Harbinger Wars," Swierczynski explains, "...is a fevered glimpse at a global power struggle that's been waging just outside our peripheral vision. The players have been desperate to maintain what they have, and have been taking huge risks to grab some more. And we're not talking about something as simple as oil; the four sides see this struggle as nothing less than a battle for the planet."

So, who are these children and why are they so importa'nt?

"Joshua Dysart likes to say that there's nothing more frightening than a child with a weapon," Shamdasani explained. "And this is the very embodiment of that idea... They're walking, talking weapons and they've been horribly mistreated. Now they're at a crossroads. 'Use my powers to help mankind... or use to reap revenge for all the misdeeds that humanity has inflicted

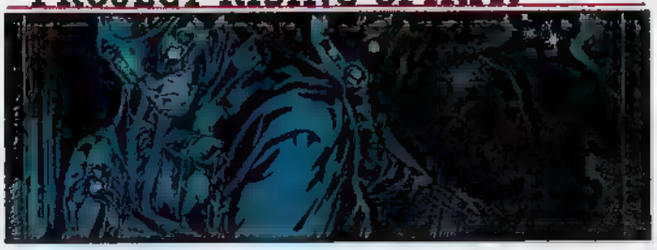


on me.' Some will go one way, some will go the other, and it's going to be fascinating to watch them interact with our established casts from *Harbinger* and *Bloodshot*. By and large, this represents a sudden and massive influx of new super-heroes in the Valiant Universe. And for every action, there must be a reaction..."

It remains to be seen just who these two dozen new characters will be, and if Valiant will continue their efforts to bring back characters from their past.

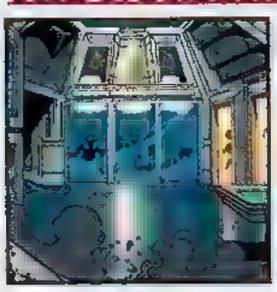
While Dysart and Swierczynski remain silent on who these new characters are, Fred Pierce, Valiant's Publisher, sheds a little light for Bleeding Cool. "This will be an entirely new cast of characters, but well-read fans of the original Valiant Universe will definitely notice some nods to characters that came before." Pierce goes on to stress, "But new readers should pay close attention as well

PROJECT RISING SPIRIT:



A shadowy, extra governmental organization experimenting in nanoscale weapons technology, Project Rising Spirit created Bloodshot to be the latest in its series of living weapons. For years, PRS has been engaged in hunting and imprisoning subjects with telekinetic powers for use in their experiments in "psiot" physiology. Director Simon Oreck will stop at nothing to further his secret agenda, one that has often put him in direct conflict with Toyo Harada and his secret Harbinger Foundation...

THE NURSERY:



Deep inside the Nursery of a remote desert facility, Project Rising Spirit has kept its most dangerous and volatile secret locked away - dozens of telekinetic children they have imprisoned and controlled for an array of horrific experiments. But now the children of the Nursery have escaped with the help of the Bloodshot, PRS's ultimate weapon and the psiot hunter that personally locked many of them away. Some of the rarest human specimens in the world, these children are about to be beset upon on all sides - by Harada and the Harbinger Foundation, by Peter Stanchek and his Renegades, and by Bloodshot himself. But not all of them will give up without a fight - and, wherever they go, the Harbinger Wars will follow in their wake...

- this group of kids and teenagers will have a major impact on the Valiant Universe for years to come."

While the four-issue *Harbinger Wars* mini-series unfolds, fans looking for more of the story can read *Bloodshot #10-13* and *Harbinger #11-14* at the same time.

"All three books will be happening simultaneously," explained Dysart. "The events in one title will lead to the events in another. There will be a legendary fight in *Bloodshot*. One in *Harbinger*, and then all will cannon into an epic convergence in *Harbinger Wars*. But as you know, it's not all about battles, and all three books have some amazing stuff going on in them that informs the other titles."

"Exactly," Swierczynski agreed. "There's one central power struggle, but you can experience it through three radically different points of view. I have a feeling if you enjoy one of them, however, you'll want to try the other two, as well."

Valiant promises this is not just any ordinary story. The outcomes of what happens in *Harbinger Wars* will be strongly felt in the Valiant Universe.

"Bloodshot will be a changed man by the end of *Harbinger Wars*," shared Swierczynski. "It's funny; Bloodshot's assault on PRS was definitely the inciting incident, but the real beginning of this conflict stretches back decades. A lot of the fun of this crossover will be revealing how far, wide and deep this struggle really is."

"The Renegades," Dysart added, "... will have been changed by this encounter in a lasting way. The events in this series will play a major role in the future shaping of the Valiant Universe's vaporous destiny."

"The events and eventual outcome of the *Harbinger Wars* will have massive repercussions for both of the ongoing titles," warned Pierce. "War is messy; it is not an isolated affair. As such, the events of *Harbinger Wars* will affect the entire cast of both of its sister titles - and in both instances, set the major players off in entirely new directions."

Shamdasani agrees: "Well, it wouldn't be a major summertime storyline if we didn't shake the very foundations of our readership's beliefs about what can and can't be done in the Valiant Universe. There are several colossal moments in *Harbinger Wars* that will certainly test just how far we can go. There is simply no escaping the fact that ramifications coming out of *Harbinger Wars* will be dramatic and pervasive. This will be a transformative period for Harada, for Peter, and for Bloodshot, but not all the revelations will be confined to the present day. Let me just say that it's called *'Harbinger Wars'* (plural) for a reason..."

COPYRIGHT 2013 VALIANT ENTERTAINMENT INC. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

Behind the Magic:
A Who's Who of Aspen

Aspen's Co-Founder and Vice President of Publishing, Peter Steigerwald, talks about just a few of the creative talents behind Aspen's ten years of success:

- **David Wohl (Writer: *Fathom*; Creator/Writer: *Legend of the Shadow Clan, Executive Assistant: Iris, Witchblade*)** "An incredible writer, creator and a good friend. His creations have been a vital part of Aspen's success."

- **Brad Foxhoven (Creator: *Legend of the Shadow Clan, Executive Assistant: Iris*)** "Has been a great supporter, promoter and sounding board, as well as a creator for Aspen."

- **John Starr (Colorist: *Legend of the Shadow Clan, Executive Assistant: Iris, Soulfire, Fathom*)** "His colors provide a vibrancy and mood that has been vital to the success of many Aspen titles over the last ten years."

- **Frank Mastromauro (Co-founder/owner, Writer: *Dellec, Shrugged*)** "Frank works tirelessly to keep Aspen running. He is Aspen as much as Mike or I ever are."

- **Beth Sotelo (Colorist: *Shrugged, Fathom, Soulfire, Soulfire: Dying of the Light*)** "She's been at Aspen since nearly the start and has been the reason so much we do looks as beautiful as it does."

- **J.T. Krul (Writer: *Soulfire, Fathom*, Creator/Writer: *Mindfield, The Lost Spark*)** "The driving heart of Soulfire for many years, he and Frank have steered that book to amazing levels. His words have excited, sorrowed, ignited controversy and inspired jealousy."

- **Vince Hernandez (Writer: *Executive Assistant: Assassins, Fathom: Kiani, Soulfire: Shadow Magic*; Creator/Writer: *Trish out of Water, Charismagic, Charismagic: Death Princess, Dellec*)** "Our hardworking Editor-in-Chief, he's got a hefty job keeping all of our books on schedule and up to our quality standards, adding to that he markets our books and coordinates our e-presence... ON TOP of all that, he regularly writes three books!"

- **Mark Roslan (Creator/Writer: *Bubblegun, Broken Pieces*)** "As our Director of Design and Production, he's responsible for designing much of the look that is Aspen comics. He's a big reason we look as good as we do."

- **Josh Reed (Letterer: All Titles)** "He works diligently to make sure each book has it's own unique voice and a look that is just Aspen's."

- **Alex Konat (Penciler: *The All New Fathom, Mindfield*)** "A wonderful example of someone who began as a fan of Aspen and with talent and hard work, turned that into a career here."

See page 77 for more about Aspen!

CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF ASPEN COMICS!

WRITTEN BY:
VINCE HERNANDEZ
(Executive Assistant: Assassins, Fathom: Kiani)

PENCILS BY:
VINCENZO CUCCA
(She-Hulk, Maat)

COLORS BY:
EMILIO LOPEZ
(Charismagic: The Death Princess)

Aspen's "10 for 10" Event Continues

FIRST ISSUES $1 FOR ONLY

follow #Aspen10

/AspenComics

PRE-ORDER THE SPECIAL RESERVED EDITION COVER TODAY!
*Ask Your Retailer How

Charismagic® and Charismagic logo are the trademark of Aspen MLT, Inc. Aspen MLT, Inc. ©2013 Aspen MLT, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

SUPER SOLDIER

FEATURING A COVER BY MIKE MIGNOLA!

MIKE MIGNOLA JOHN ARCUDI JASON LATOUR

DARK HORSE COMICS

DarkHorse.com

Sledgehammer 44™ © 2013 Mike Mignola. Dark Horse Comics® and the Dark Horse logo are trademarks of Dark Horse Comics, Inc. registered in various categories and countries. All rights reserved.

AVAILABLE AT YOUR LOCAL COMICS SHOP

To find a comics shop in your area, call 1-888-266-4226

For more information or to order direct visit DarkHorse.com or call 1-800-862-0052

The *Star Wars* Comic Books:

A Marvel to Behold, a Dark Horse to Reckon With

By *Rich Handley*

THE *STAR WARS* COMIC BOOKS

by Rich Handley

A long time ago, in movie theaters far across the globe, cinemagoers waited to view the latest work by filmmaker George Lucas, the writer and director of *THX-1138* and *American Graffiti*. The new film, *Star Wars*, was deemed a risky venture—a "space fantasy" movie at a time when the sci-fi and fantasy genres were often derided. Would Twentieth Century Fox recoup its $11 million investment? Would audiences embrace a space-age fairy tale about a daydreaming farm boy, a rebellious princess and two bickering robots?

The answer to both questions was a resounding "yes." *Star Wars* raked in nearly $800 million worldwide (a staggering sum in 1977), becoming the highest-grossing film to that point. It earned ten Academy Award nominations, and the studio celebrated that success by green-lighting sequels—not just on film, but also in print.

MARVELOUS ADVENTURES

Among the first publishers to receive a license for *Star Wars* fiction was Marvel Comics—but it almost didn't happen. Publisher Stan Lee initially rejected a proposal from George Lucas and advertising publicity supervisor Charles Lippincott, preferring company-owned concepts over licensed adaptations. Determined, Lippincott urged writer Roy Thomas to champion the proposal, enticing him with production drawings from Ralph McQuarrie.

Thomas remained indifferent until viewing a painting of motley aliens in a space cantina. He then offered to write the series—but first, they'd have to change Lee's

mind. The writer later recalled, in an article in *Article Ego Magazine #68* ("*Star Wars*: The Comic Book That Saved Marvel!"), that Lee only gave in after learning that the film would star Alec Guinness. Ironically, given both men's reluctance, the Star Wars line has been credited with sparing Marvel from bankruptcy.

Marvel adapted the film in a variety of formats and also launched a monthly spinoff, beginning with a four-issue Han and Chewbacca tale by Thomas and artist Howard Chaykin. That storyline, though sometimes panned for its inclusion of a 6-foot-tall rabbit named Jaxxon (modeled after Bugs Bunny), holds a vital place in Star Wars lore, helping to establish one of the most successful publishing franchises of all time. During the past 35 years, Star Wars comics have enjoyed near-continuous publication, with more than a thousand issues to date from various companies.

Thomas quickly departed despite his early support, feeling under-appreciated due, in part, to Lucas' vocal criticism. John Jackson Miller reported, in a 2008 story for *The Overstreet Comic Book Price Guide #38*, that Thomas "perceived the filmmakers were still trying to piece together what they wanted to do next—the result being that his Magnificent Seven storyline for #7-10 drew criticism from Lucas for being too close to the movie and for including a large bipedal green rabbit... Strangely, nobody seems to have been bothered by the big porcupine in those issues."

Thomas told Alter Ego, "I must admit that I felt somewhat vindicated years later about the specific reasons for my leaving when I heard about Jar Jar Binks in the fourth Star Wars film, *The Phantom Menace*. The negative reaction to that character by just about everybody in the audience over age eight dwarfed anything that George could've felt about Jaxxon, the alien green rabbit. In fact, I'll bet Jaxxon would've been received far more favorably!"

But the Marvel run endured, producing 107 monthly U.S. issues (including adaptations of *A New Hope* and *The Empire Strikes Back*), three annuals, a four-part *Return of the Jedi* miniseries, 14 issues of *Ewoks*, eight issues of *Droids*, two digests presenting tales previously released in the United Kingdom, and a 16-chapter strip in *Pizzazz* magazine. It also produced eight additional tales for its weekly U.K. title that remained unavailable to American readers for years to come.

No shortage of talented—in some cases, legendary—individuals graced Marvel's run following Thomas and Chaykin, including scribes Archie Goodwin, David Michelinie, Chris Claremont, Jo Duffy and Alan Moore, as well as artists Carmine Infantino, Walt Simonson, Tom Palmer and Cynthia Martin. The monthly title ran from 1977 to 1986, though *Droids* and *Ewoks* lasted another

year. Marvel's final Star Wars work (a 1988 British hardcover annual) reprinted several *Ewoks* issues and also presented original prose stories that have yet to see U.S. publication.

Marvel created many memorable tales, such as Goodwin's *House of Tagge* epic, about an Imperial family at odds with Darth Vader; "The Weapons Master," exploring how Leia learned to fight on a weaponless world; Michelinie's Shira Brie saga, in which Luke's lover became a Sith Lord known as Dark Lady Lumiya (later a villain in Del Rey's novels); and his Tarkin two-parter, which predicted the Empire's second Death Star by a few years (and thus had to be altered visually, per Lucasfilm mandate).

Other notable entries included Duffy's "The Apprentice," with Vader corrupting a Force-adept named Flint who'd lost his mother (uncannily mirroring Vader's fall from grace in *Attack of the Clones*, two decades before its release); Claremont's *World of Fire*, with Luke and Leia stealing an experimental Imperial warship; and Moore's macabre, Lovecraftian take on Star Wars, particularly "Dark Lord's Conscience," "Tilotny Throws a Shape" and "Blind Fury."

Since the series was published between films, writers lacked foreknowledge of *Episodes V* and *VI*, causing some aspects to become problematic, such as a brilliant backstory for Boba Fett later contradicted by the prequels, and the appearance of Jabba the Hut (sic) as a bipedal, yellow-skinned humanoid. Other often-cited missteps include a nonsensical *Droids-Ewoks* crossover, the introduction of cute, telepathic bunnies called Hoojibs, and the arrival of the Tofs, alien invaders drawn like rotund sea pirates—basically, evil Jack Sparrows tinted green and shaped like a blueberry-gum-engorged Violet Beauregarde.

Still, Marvel's run displayed vitality and a sense of giddy fun often lacking in franchised comics. Though not perfect, it

THE KUAT SYSTEM. THE CORE WORLDS.
WHAT IS THY BIDDING, MASTER?
YOUR PRESENCE IS NO LONGER NEEDED AT KUAT, LORD VADER. THE LOCAL OFFICIALS HAVE BEEN SUFFICIENTLY... MOTIVATED BY YOUR PROXIMITY.
I TRUST IN THESE INTERVENING WEEKS YOU HAVE HAD TIME TO PONDER YOUR FAILURE AT YAVIN?
I HAVE KEPT MY INTELLIGENCE OPERATIVES BUSY, YES. WE ARE CLOSER THAN EVER TO SEEING THE END OF THE REBELLION.
YAVIN FOUR WAS A SETBACK. TARKIN WAS A FOOL--

I DO NOT NEED TO BE REMINDED OF TARKIN.
YES, MASTER.
I HAVE A NEW ASSIGNMENT FOR YOU.
JUST AS YOU DO NOT NEED A REMINDER THAT IT WAS YOUR FAILURE TO STOP A SINGLE SNUBFIGHTER THAT SET THE EMPIRE BACK TRILLIONS OF CREDITS AND NEARLY TWO DECADES OF WORK.

was, at its core, very solid Star Wars. To this day, in fact, it is frequently referenced throughout the Expanded Universe (EU)—rabbits and all.

A DAILY DOSE OF *STAR WARS*

Concurrent with the Marvel run was a newspaper strip produced by the L.A. Times Syndicate from 1979 to 1984, set between *A New Hope* and *The Empire Strikes Back*. Marvel's tales and the Syndicate's 27 storylines neither referenced nor contradicted each other, making it easy to weave them into the same tapestry. The strips are highly regarded, thanks to the talents of Archie Goodwin and three men named Russ.

The first nine chapters were written and illustrated by Russ Manning, whose lighthearted voice fit *Star Wars*' Flash Gordon-esque style well, though some concepts (such as Vader kidnapping school children) were a bit off the wall. Each tale was self-contained, with little connecting one to the next, aside from humorous bookend strips in which C-3PO narrated his comrades' adventures to Mistress Mnemos, a Rebel supercomputer that often chided him for straying into irrelevancy.

The Threepio/Mnemos scenes ceased after Manning's first three tales, once the format of separate stories for daily and Sunday strips was dropped in favor of a single, seven-day storyline. Among his memorable entries were an untitled yarn later dubbed "The Kazhyyyk Depths" by *Star Wars* author Jason Fry, in which Chewie traveled home to celebrate Life Day; "Tatooine Sojourn," with Luke and the droids investigating an Imperial capsule that had killed a tribe of Jawas, filling their eyes with star-charts; and "The Second Kessel Run," in which the Rebels sought to stop the Empire from utilizing its latest weapon, the Ionic Ring.

Following Manning's departure, Goodwin took on double-duties, penning the L.A. Times strips in addition to his Marvel

gig. His initial outing, "Planet of Kadril," illustrated by Alfredo Alcala, was written under the pseudonym Russ Helm. That storyline was rather weak given his Star Wars experience, but was quickly forgotten as he next adapted Brian Daley's novel *Han Solo at Stars' End*. Goodwin remained with the strip until its final storyline, producing 16 highly touted tales illustrated by the brilliant Al Williamson. Williamson had previously been considered as artist, but the job had been given to Manning; an incomplete *A New Hope* adaptation he'd created to launch the series was published years later in James Van Hise's *The Art of Al Williamson*.

Unlike his Marvel stint, Goodwin had the benefit of hindsight when composing the strips. Although *Empire* had already hit theaters, the strips were set before the Battle of Hoth, enabling him to work a variety of elements from that sequel (and, later, *Jedi*) into the mix, such as the evacuation from Yavin IV, Han's bounty hunter encounter at Ord Mantell, Vader's Super Star Destroyer Executor, and the in-print debut of Admiral Ackbar prior to his onscreen appearance.

The L.A. Times strips remain among the most respected of *Star Wars* lore, from Manning's pulp sci-fi storytelling to Goodwin's spot-on characterizations and imaginative plots, to Williamson's extremely detailed artwork. An impressive limited-edition hardcover slipcase collection of the unedited Goodwin/Williamson strips was produced in 1991 by Russ Cochran Publishing.

I AM SENDING YOU COORDINATES. YOU WILL LEAVE YOUR STAR DESTROYER AND TRAVEL BY UNMARKED LIGHT CRUISER TO THIS LOCATION.
ONCE YOU ARRIVE, ALL WILL BE MADE CLEAR.
OF COURSE, MASTER.
AND WHAT OF THE SEARCH FOR THE REBELS, AND THE COMMAND OF THIS SHIP?
I AM SENDING YOU ONE COLONEL BIRCHER. YOU KNOW HIM?
"YOU WILL TRANSFER ALL COMMAND CODES TO BIRCHER. YOU WILL NOT BE RETURNING TO THIS SHIP.
"I CAN SENSE YOUR ANGER. IT HAS VERY NEARLY ECLIPSED YOUR SHAME. GOOD.
...AND THE LOSS OF YOUR STAR DESTROYER WILL BE TRIVIAL COMPARED TO ALL THAT YOU MAY GAIN.
AND I WILL BE IN NO POSITION TO DENY ANY OF IT TO YOU.

ADDING NEW DIMENSION

As Marvel wrapped up its *Ewoks* run, independent book company Blackthorne Publishing acquired a license to produce *Star Wars* comics, but with a gimmicky twist: printed in 3D and packaged with cardboard glasses containing blue-and-red polarized lenses to provide stereoscopic depth. Blackthorne's hope was to harken back to a

BY REPUTATION.
FOR ONE SO YOUNG, HE IS QUITE CAPABLE. HE ALMOST REMINDS ME OF YOU, LORD VADER.
BUT...WITH A RECORD STILL UNBLEMISHED BY FAILURE.
...
TION. I RTANCE NS OF A ER TO ME.
EM YOURSELF, ADER..."

popular cinematic trend from decades prior.

Unfortunately, the comics were polarizing in more than just the intended manner, for without the special specs, many found *Star Wars 3-D* difficult (and even painful) to read. Limited distribution, coupled with the 3D format's unpopularity, resulted in a quick cancelation. Only three issues were released, in 1987 and 1988, though at least three more were planned. Little is known about #4 or #5, but a script by John A. Theisen has surfaced, titled "*Star Wars in 3D #6—The Spies of Botha*," featuring a forlorn Bothan miner named Stinky.

Michael A. Stackpole referenced the series in his *X-wing* novels, citing the character of Throgg, to whom Luke gifted the deed to his family's moisture farm in issue #1. Otherwise, Blackthorne's headache-inducing corner of the Star Wars EU has received little fanfare.

WHAT IS "YUB NUB" IN SPANISH?

During the mid to late '80s, the Star Wars franchise entered a lull phase, producing little new material aside from two Ewok telefilms, West End Games' roleplaying game, and the *Droids* and *Ewoks* animated series. The latter dominated Lucasfilm's merchandising efforts, including not only the Marvel tie-ins, but also storybooks, action figures, lunchboxes, clothing and more.

What fans may not know is that Marvel wasn't the only publisher to print comics based on the cartoons—though it was the only one to do so in English. In Spain, Editorial Gepsa's *MyComyc* featured serialized strips based on numerous shows, including *Pink Panther, Tom and Jerry*, and *Inspector Gadget*, with two pages per issue devoted to every series. For the first eight issues, published in 1986, *Ewoks* and *Droids* were included among the lineup—original tales, not mere Marvel reprints.

The *Ewoks* artwork was similar to Marvel's version, but *Droids*' aesthetic widely varied from both Marvel and the TV show.

with *MyComyc*'s Jann Tosh far more resembling Thall Joben. A total of thirty pages of *Star Wars* appeared in those issues (*MyComyc* remained in publication beyond issue #8, sans robots and teddy bears), which was reprinted in a single *MyComyc* omnibus. To date, none of this material has been released to an English-speaking audience.

DARK HORSE TAKES THE REINS

Toward the end of Marvel's run, writer Tom Veitch and artist Cam Kennedy proposed *Dark Empire*, based on their miniseries *The Light and Darkness War*, published by Marvel's Epic Comics imprint. Goodwin and Lucas accepted the proposal, but when Marvel lost the license, it would be several more years before *Dark Empire* would come to fruition under a new publisher.

"When Dark Horse expressed interest in the license," says Randy Stradley, the company's VP of publishing, "Lucasfilm ended Marvel's license and brought the property to us. We discovered that *Star Wars* was by no means 'over.' In fact, for the decade during which Marvel had the license, the franchise was probably massively underexploited." The license, he explains, was for far more than just the adventures of Luke and Vader, opening up "the story potential of an entire galaxy, with a history spanning thousands of years. A single monthly comic book couldn't hope to do more than scratch the surface of that potential."

Dark Empire resurrected Emperor Palpatine as a clone and also revealed that Boba Fett survived the Sarlacc. It received Lucas' direct story input and explored Luke's darker side, as the young Jedi voluntarily joined the emperor reborn in order to destroy the Dark Side from within. Despite criticism regarding Fett's and Palpatine's resurrections, *Dark Empire* earned widespread acclaim and, along with Timothy Zahn's Thrawn novels, helped to revitalize the flagging franchise.

Several other series soon followed,

LORD VADER?
I'M GLAD I FOUND YOU. I UNDERSTAND YOU WERE INFORMED I'D BE ASSUMING COMMAND OF THIS SHIP?
I DO NOT KNOW WHAT YOU THINK YOU ARE GAINING HERE, COLONEL BIRCHER, BUT I CAN TELL YOU IT IS NOTHING.
...THERE WILL BE NO PLACE FOR YOU TO HIDE.

including *Tales of the Jedi* (set during the Old Republic, thousands of years earlier), *Droids* (featuring more adventures for R2 and 3PO) and *Classic Star Wars* (reprinting much of the L.A. Times strips and, later, Marvel). Overnight, Star Wars was again massively popular. "Maybe the reason we received such support from the fans right from the beginning was that they recognized us as kindred spirits," Stradley recalls. "I mean, it was pretty difficult to be around in the Eighties and not be a Star Wars fan, but we embraced the Star Wars business wholeheartedly. It wasn't just a job; it was a joy."

In the two decades since *Dark Empire*'s release, the company has published nearly 800 Star Wars comics, spanning from thousands of years before the Battle of Yavin to several generations after Endor. Hundreds of creators have contributed to this success, including; John Ostrander, John Jackson Miller, Jan Duursema, Joe Corroney, Kevin J. Anderson, Ron Marz, Tim Truman and Michael A. Stackpole.

"Early on, I think the comics reflected that natural desire not only to emulate the formats of the films (we had lots of super-weapons, rebellions, etc.), but to top them (by making the Force powers bigger, the stakes higher and that sort of thing)," Stradley states. "These days, I urge my writers to focus on the characters—their desires and their emotions. Because, if you really look at the films, they're not about the Death Star, or awesome spaceships and vehicles, or who can do what with the Force; they're about the larger-than-life struggles between characters who have conflicting visions for what the galaxy should be."

To that end, Dark Horse's authors have explored the histories of countless characters both minor and major, from Chewbacca, Lando Calrissian, Yoda and Jabba the Hutt to Biggs Darklighter, Boba and Jango Fett, Aurra Sing, Bail Organa, General Grievous, Qui-Gon Jinn, Darth Maul, Padme Amidala, Asajj Ventress, Mon Mothma and even the

much-maligned Jar Jar. They've also been allowed to reveal the futures of the Skywalker and Organa-Solo families.

Along the way, Stradley says, he and Dark Horse founder Mike Richardson "learned to stop attempting to fill in gaps in the continuity, or to write stories that explain why things are the way they are. You quickly learn that by doing those kinds of stories, you eventually paint yourself into a continuity corner from which there is no elegant escape." He cites an old writer's adage, "The more you define, the more you confine."

That's not to say Dark Horse has not had missteps of its own. The decision to no longer focus on gap-filling, for example, has resulted in some negative feedback on the company's message boards. Moreover, as with Marvel, the writers again lacked foreknowledge of future films, and could not have known a prequel trilogy and The Clone Wars cartoon would render a portion of their work inaccurate. This resulted in a number of elements that now seem out of sync with the prequels.

For example: massive armies of Sith battling Jedi forces, contradicting Yoda's statement, "Always two there are, a master and an apprentice"; Jedi being recruited in adulthood, despite Anakin being deemed too old for training; the Old Republic existing for tens of thousands of years, in contrast to onscreen dialog indicating it had only been a millennium; contradictory accounts of the Clone Wars; an incompatible history of the planet Mandalore; and so forth. The company has also, at times, contradicted Marvel's continuity. X-wing Rogue Squadron, for instance, left little room for Duffy's post-ROTJ events, while the timeline of Dark Horse's Rebellion-era tales cannot be easily reconciled with the Marvel series and newspaper strips without considerable shoehorning.

Still, Dark Horse has been a bedrock in growing the Expanded Universe, adding more new tales to the EU than all other publishers combined. In recent years, the company has added a number of new titles, including video game tie-in *Knights of the Old Republic*, as well as *Legacy*, starring Cade Skywalker, who rejected his Jedi heritage to become a bounty hunter; *Agent of the Empire*, about an Imperial Intelligence agent and his droid; *Invasion*, set during Del Rey's Yuuzhan Vong War; *Purge*, with Vader tracking down Jedi refugees who'd escaped Order 66; and *Dawn of the Jedi*, set 35,000 years in the past, regarding an early schism between the dark and the light.

What's more, a wide range of tales have filled in the turbulent years between prequels, before, during and after the Clone Wars. Whatever a fan's preferences, chances are Dark Horse has published something suitable. Several new *Star Wars* titles are available now and on the horizon, including:

- An ongoing series launched in January 2013, by Brian Wood and Carlos D'Anda, simply titled *Star Wars* and set during the era of Rebellion.
- Follow-ups to several existing titles: *Agent of the Empire: Hard Targets, Purge: The Tyrant's Fist* and *Dawn of the Jedi: Prisoner of Bogan.*
- *Dark Times: Fire Carrier,* a five-issue series by Stradley and Gabriel Guzman, occurring immediately after *Revenge of the Sith*, as well as another *Dark Times* miniseries thereafter.
- A *Legacy* story by Corinna Bechko and Gabriel Hardman (widely praised for their *Planet of the Apes* books for BOOM! Studios), starring a descendant of Han and Leia named Ania Solo.
- *Darth Vader and the Ninth Assassin*, by Tim Siedell and Stephen Thompson, exploring Vader's early days as a Sith Lord.
- Additional Omnibus editions, including *Wild Space, Volume 1*, set to collect a ton of classic material, including *Star Wars 3-D*, all of Marvel's U.K. tales, Pizzazz, *Star Wars* Kids and several rare Dark Horse one-shots.

After that? "Well, what happens next is still a secret," Stradley teases, "but it's big. In some ways, it's as big as the whole Star Wars galaxy itself. But that's all I can say for now. You'll just have to wait!"

TO INFINITIES AND BEYOND

Outside continuity, Dark Horse also published a number of titles under the *Star Wars Infinities* umbrella, enabling writers to craft unorthodox stories unhampered by canon. These included alternate tellings of the films; satires by Sergio Aragonés, Mark Evanier and Kevin Rubio; selected stories in the *Star Wars Tales* anthology; *Visions of the Blade*, a crossover with the *Soul Calibur* mythos; and more.

During Dark Horse's tenure, StarWars.com released original *Clone Wars* Web comics tied to the animated series, while Scholastic published Rebellion-era strips in *Star Wars Kids* magazine. Tokyopop produced two manga one-shots, *Black and Silver*, containing non-canon tales by Japanese creators, and Take Shobo produced a Japanese exclusive, *The Clone Wars Manga*, using TV series stills. In addition, other Star Wars comics have been released over the years:

- Pendulum Press adapted the first film in 1978 as part of its *Contemporary Motivators* series.
- Kenner included a black-and-white comic booklet with its Imperial Troop Transporter toy.
- *Rocket's Blast Comicollector #139*, printed in 1978, adapted *A New Hope*'s cantina scene.
- Hasbro Italy produced a brief comic book intended to sell action figures.
- Golden Books released a children's coloring book, *An Ewok Adventure* (*Comics to Color*).
- StarWars.com and Lego Group offered comics based on the popular *Star Wars* Lego brand.
- And Hungarian artist Attila Fazekas adapted *Episodes IV* and *V*, which were unsanctioned until Lucasfilm allowed the publication of the long-lost *Episode VI* adaptation last year.

Most of these titles are quite rare, though Dark Horse has reprinted some of them in its Omnibus line. Given Lucasfilm's acquisition by Walt Disney Co., it remains to be seen whether the firm will continue offering such reprints. It is rumored that Disney may return the license to Marvel (which it owns), but Stradley is unconcerned. "I, for one, welcome our new mouse-ear-wearing overlords," he jokes. "Also, I pay no attention to rumors. Until I have facts, I can't let 'maybes' interfere with what we've got coming up."

Ryder Windham, the author of more than 50 Star Wars books to date, hopes the Horse will be with us... always. "My first work on Star Wars stories was as an editor at Dark Horse Comics in the early 1990s, so I'm admittedly biased, but I hope the rumors are false," he states. "For over twenty years, Dark Horse has made an enormous contribution to the Star Wars franchise, and I hope Disney and Lucasfilm appreciate Dark Horse's contribution. I also hope that after they do any necessary math, they'll realize it would be only good business for all involved to extend Dark Horse's license beyond 2013."

Thanks to Randy Stradley, John Jackson Miller, Ryder Windham, Eddie van der Heijden and Joseph Bongiorno for their invaluable assistance.

SIX SCI-FI MOVIE FIXES FOR 2013

by Brendon Connelley

Though 2001 was supposed to see us take a *Space Odyssey* and 2010 was touted as *The Year We Make Contact*, it seems Arthur C. Clarke got that all wrong. Mayan calendar wrong. I'm still here, feet flat on the ground, not a single alien life form amongst my Facebook friends.

But we can't blame him for trying. It's the prerogative of science fiction authors to look into the future and to extrapolate about the state of things to come.

In that spirit, then, let's look off towards the distant horizons of mid-to-late 2013. Perhaps I'll do better than Clarke did when I christen 2013 "The Year that Sci-Fi Took Over The Multiplexes."

Some of the many, many science fiction films coming along this year you already know about, but that doesn't mean they're interesting, so we'll take a look at three of those.

And then we'll also have a look at three other, lesser known pictures.

Stars shining in as-yet uncharted space.

Gravity

Alfonso Cuaron first made a science fiction film, as opposed to a fantasy or a fairy tale, in 2006. That was the instantly beloved, technically astonishing *Children of Men*. But since then, he hasn't released a single narrative feature film.

But he certainly hasn't had his feet up for the last half decade. For much of the time he's been working on *Gravity*, an ambitious and complex undertaking that seems to have required both an extremely elaborate shoot and some very involved post production. For example, the film goes for seventeen minutes before there's a single apparent edit, all in 3D, filled wall-to-wall with CG.

The story is, to begin with at least, a two hander with astronauts played by George Clooney and Sandra Bullock attempting their return to Earth from a space mission. Early on though, something goes wrong - very wrong - and after that, the film is literally a two hander. As in "Sandra Bullock has got two hands."

An incomplete version of *Gravity* played to test audiences. Some people loved it and considered it a masterpiece, while others were put off by the lack of dialogue or character interaction.

After Earth

M. Night Shyamalan's *The Last Airbender* could well have been renamed *How To Lose Friends and Alienate People* without the title losing any relevance, but he certainly seems to be on the comeback trail with *After Earth*.

First of all, it's a sci-fi film with Will Smith, so the box office should be taken care of. Secondly, the first batches of released footage show something slick and well-made.

The film's basic premise might seem familiar to fans of Jack Kirby's *Kamandi*: a young boy is stranded alone and fighting for his life on a future Earth overtaken by

deadly, highly evolved flaura and fauna.

He's being played here by Jaden Smith, who has pushed his dad over into a supporting role.

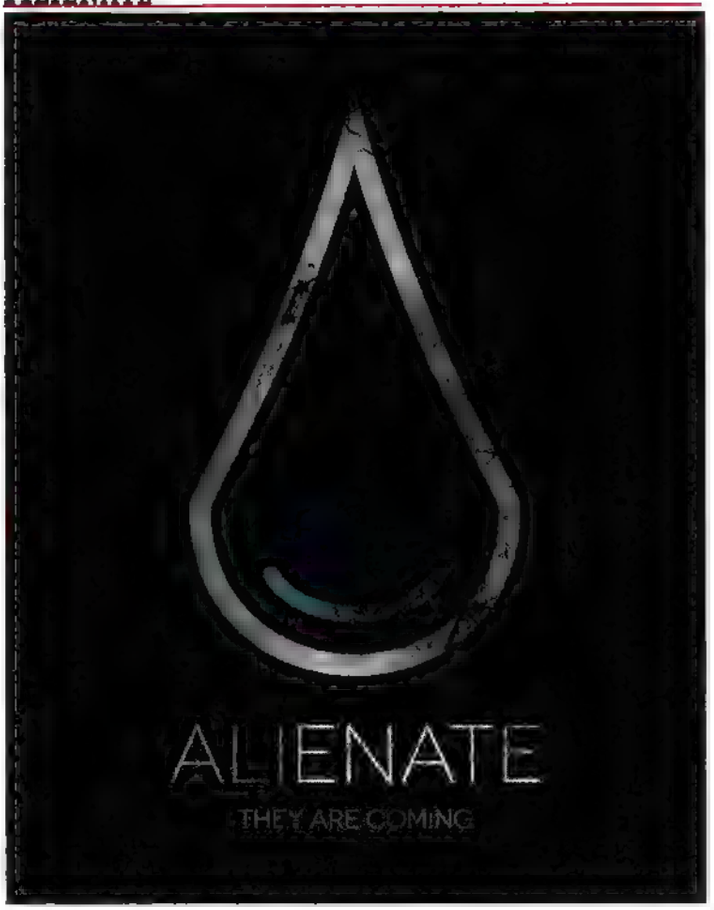
The Book of Eli's Gary Whitta originated the script and *Traffic*'s Stephen Gaghan did the final draft, and they've both done cracking work before. It's safe to be optimistic about this one, I think.

Space Station 76

Most science fiction looks forwards, but Jack Plotnick has his eye on the past. In Space Station 76, he's filtering his 1970s upbringing through that decade's sci-fi tropes. It looks like *Alien* or *2001* remodelled as an easy listening lounge, and despite the big sci-fi elements like robots and cyborg prosthetics, Plotnick says the film is, at heart, an "homage" to his parents who, back in the 70s, wanted to separate but stayed together for the kids.

Liv Tyler, Patrick Wilson and Matt Bomer are amongst the cast of the film which shot way under the radar late last year. One of the least conventional sci-fi pictures of 2013, I've got a hunch it's also going to be one of the most worthwhile.

Alienate



A properly independent film with the kind of budget you could lose down the back of a sofa, *Alienate* nevertheless appears to be a very well-styled picture. The digital revolution has sometimes put affordable cameras and editing kits into the hands of just the right people.

Stylistically, the films are rather different indeed but the basic premise of *Alienate* reminds me of *Cloverfield*: at just the wrong time in their relationship, a couple is divided by an alien invasion.

Planes fall out of the sky, communication networks crumble and society whips itself into a frenzy, but amidst this, our protagonist does everything he can to try and reach his wife.

The director of *Alienate* is Michael Shumway - no relation to ALF, surely? That would be cheating. Shumway's background is as a composer and he's scored the film, but he didn't use his own music in the *Alienate* trailer, instead setting the footage to Handel's Sarabande. It was a masterstroke. Here's hoping the finished film lives up to that level of intensity and excitement.

The Prototype

One of 2013's two films with the very same name, this is the one produced by the guys behind *Act of Valor*. I for one am relieved that they're not directing. Instead, Andrew Will is making his debut, from his own screenplay.

For a sci-fi chase film, there was something very sad and melancholy about the pre-production test footage shot for *Prototype*. The film is about a humanoid drone, developed by the military as a killing machine. We're explicitly told that it's a robot but the implications are that it's a cyborg, and under the hard metal facade, all too human, heavy breathing, sad and alone. Imagine a cross between *The Iron Giant* and *Robocop*, but living rough on the streets, forever trying to hide from prying eyes.

The film will certainly deliver action too, with *Captain America* and *Justified*'s Neal McDonough heading the team on the trail of the escaped cyborg. If *The Prototype* works to the best of its potential, it will be because of the blend of these elements.

Elysium

Neill Blomkamp's second feature eschews the faux-documentary stylings of *District 9*, but not the complex layering of CG work, deeply designed future world or social and political commentary.

Some footage was screened at Comic Con in San Diego last summer, after which Sony put the cork back in the bottle and left everybody hanging for months and months with hardly a whisper. I really do feel the anticipation like an itch, and it seems cruel to be told that it's going to be August before we can all have a good hard scratch, especially when the film was originally scheduled for March.

The film's title refers to a space station built in the image of a Stanford Torus, a great wheel in the sky where the rich and privileged fritter away lives of leisure. Meanwhile, down on the polluted, overpopulated planet Earth, the working classes toil thanklessly. At a snap, I'd say Blomkamp's world has gone from a 99% to 1% split to something more like 99.999 versus 0.001.

Matt Damon plays a menial worker who wants to reach Elysium in order to save his life after a horrible accident in his factory. Can he also bring about equality while he's there? Well... I can't imagine this story ending well, I'm afraid. Perhaps I'm too much of a realist - and for all of the sci-fi trappings, I think Blomkamp is too.

THE BLACK BOLT LIST

by Rich Johnston

Every year, the US film industry issues its Black List, a collection of unproduced screenplays of the highest quality, often as a way of shaming people into actually making the films. *Django Unchained, Slumdog Millionaire* and *The King's Speech* are recent examples.

This is a little different. As well as celebrating the pitches that have yet to find a publisher, this list also looks at completed or half-completed comics projects that have not been published. Some I knew before, some I discovered while researching and some... well just blew me away.

Lobo: The Hand To Hand Job is a sexual crime antic by Alan Grant and Frank Quitely, a completed graphic novel sitting in a drawer in DC Comics, not being published. And has been for years. Just typing those words makes me angry. Grant said of the comic, "*The Hand Job* featured Lobo being hired to find the kidnappers of a Hugh Hefner-like figure, the publisher of the galaxy's raunchiest porn mags. For about half the book, Lobo appeared naked. The climax of the story featured 10,000 asteroid miners masturbating." It's the kind of thing that a more puritanical Paul Levitz may have sat on, such as Warren Ellis' *Hellblazer: Shoot.* But, if that has now been published by DC, why not a Frank Quitely Lobo graphic novella?

But it's too early to start with the weeping, there's a lot more to come.

Such as *Lobo's Dawg* by Keith Giffen and Bill Wray, fully pencilled but killed dead when it was seen exactly how vile it was. Giffen describes it as the "sickest thing I've ever written made sicker by Wray's over the top art."

The classic killed comic is, of course, the unseen issue of *Swamp Thing* by Rick Veitch that featured Jesus as a White Magician, and Swamp Thing as the crucifix. Banned, supposedly, for featuring a real person, which hasn't seemed to stop other comics. Clearly it was a religious issue. As a result of this, a number of creators stopped working at DC and a number of high profile creators such as Neil Gaiman turned down taking the book on afterwards.

While what you think of the creator's talents is immaterial, there is a five-issue partially-finished-but-never-scheduled *Killraven* mini-series by Robert Kirkman and Rob Liefeld. But Kirkman has fallen out with Marvel, and Rob Liefeld isn't far behind. Paid for, stored in a drawer, never to be seen. And Rob Liefeld's collaboration with Image publisher Eric Stephenson and Keron Grant, *Century*, was shelved when two issues had been completed...

A Nick Fury series by Brian Bendis and Howard Chaykin never saw publication, though setting it in the 1950s did inspire the more recent *Avengers 1959.* A previous Nick Fury series by Roger Stern and Frank Miller never made it past discussions. Also dead in the water was the Nick Fury/Punisher graphic novel by Jim Lee, *Rules of the Game,* waylaid by his *Uncanny X-Men* gig ten pages in. Jim Lee is also believed to be behind the reasons European-art-themed

Batman Europa never made it to comic shops a couple of years ago... but DC insists it is still not cancelled.

BUY THIS BOOK!
(OR FACE THE WRATH OF THE DREAD DORMAMMU!)
WATCH FOR THE NEW ADVENTURES OF EARTH'S SORCERER SUPREME—AS MYSTICALLY CONJURED BY ROGER STERN AND FRANK MILLER!
LET EVIL BEWARE...
THE DOCTOR IS IN!
DOCTOR STRANGE
ON SALE EVERY (60) DAYS!

Roger Stern and Frank Miller also had a Doctor Strange comic in discussion that never made it past an in-house advertisement. Harlan Ellison and John Romita Jr's Doctor Strange book was planned a couple of decades later under Joe Quesada, but it never occurred.

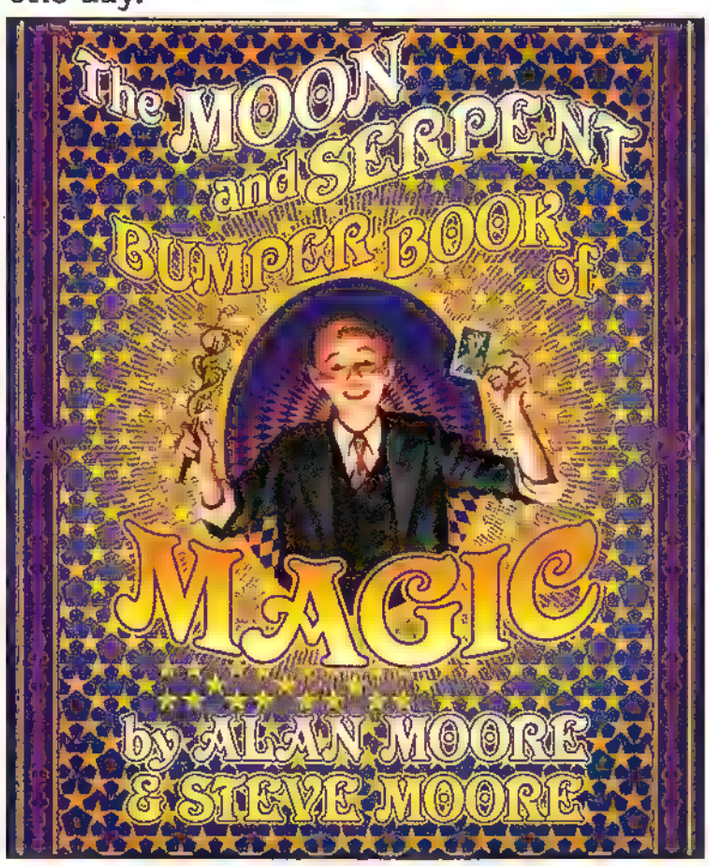
Top Ten Season Two by Xander Cannon and Gene Ha was the Alan Moore-approved sequel to *Top Ten* by Moore, Ha and Cannon. And it was fantastic, at least as good as the original. But then, six issues in, it stopped. The final six issues have been written and Zander Cannon will happily show you his thumbnails at any comic convention you find him. But Gene Ha, exclusively signed to DC, has never been assigned to finish it. Nor has any other artist been similarly assigned. With all the fuss over *Before Watchmen*, here was an Alan Moore spinoff he had actually approved, and it remains buried.

Alan Moore has plenty of such projects worth exploring. *Twilight of the Superheroes* was a pitch to DC for a big crossover project they bought, but then Moore jumped ship leaving the proposal stranded. DC does own it, however, and there have been certain signs thirty years later that maybe, just maybe, they may be revisiting this unmade proposal in some form or another...

Other never-to-be-seen projects from Moore include *Comet Rangers* which would have been part of *America's Best Comics* for Jim Lee to draw. Jim was also intending to draw the 1963 annual that would have finished that Image series as well, but it was not to be.

Alan Moore's *Gen 13* had no artist attached, just half an issue of script written. He also had a mermaid comic lined up for ABC entitled *Pearl of the Deep*.

The Moon and Serpent Bumper Book of Magic by Alan Moore and Steve Moore is linked to Alan's series of performance works and resultant CDs and comics. Moore seems to have moved on from that to his *The Story* media work and his *Jerusalem* novel, but Top Shelf still expects to publish this book. One day.



I'm a big fan of British stand up comedian and iconoclast, Stewart Lee, and feel I'd have loved his *Agatha Harkness, Princess of Darkness* series for Marvel that just never worked out.

Right after Jeff Lemire's *The Nobody*, he pitched a Swamp Thing graphic novel to Bob Schreck at Vertigo called *Endless Winter* and featured a Canadian lumberjack name Jacob Mullin from 1898 who became an earlier Swampy in the Boreal Swamps of Manitoba.

It was turned down because novelist China Mieville's Swampy was already in production and Lemire re-purposed the central idea into his *Animal Man* annual last year.

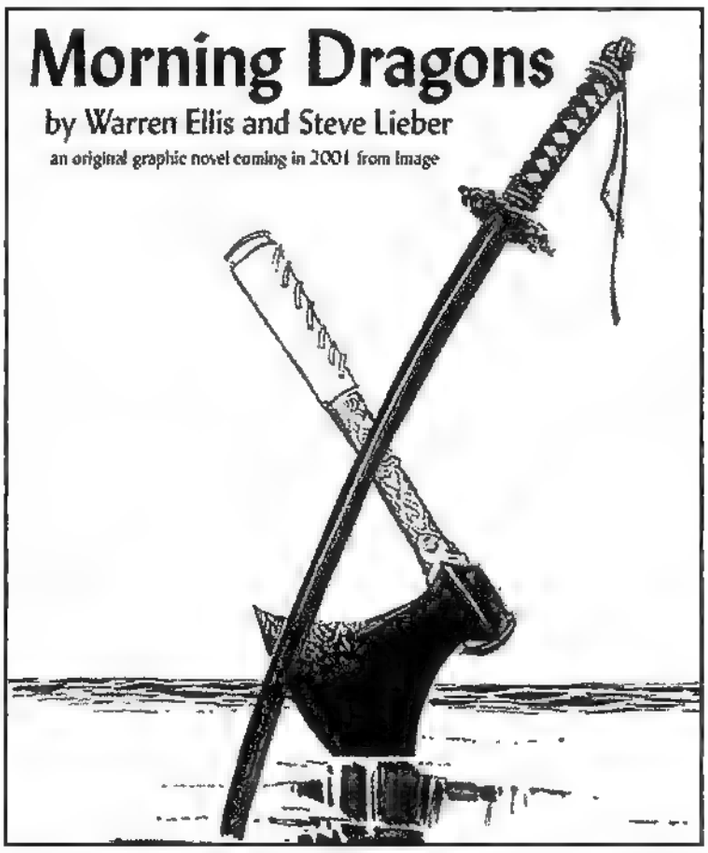
Mieville's *Swamp Thing* was being produced just before DC Comics decided that the Swamp Thing character should be transferred back for the exclusive use of the DC Universe offices, scrapping five issues worth of story, a number of which has already been drawn. One DC executive described the story to me, rather mockingly as, "Swamp Thing with machine guns." I have to say it rather intrigued me...

The writer of the New 52 *Swamp Thing* relaunch, Scott Snyder, may not have written that series, or *Batman*, if he had taken on a green lit comic book at Marvel Comics with Oz creator Skottie Young, a reworking of Pinocchio. But the DC siren call was too much. Still, could we have had a *Pinocchio: Court of the Grasshoppers* or *Dry Rot of the Family* instead?

Black Sails was to have been an Ed Brubaker/Sean Phillips series from IDW that would have preceded the pair's collaboration on *Criminal* for Marvel. But *Criminal*, it seemed, sank their piratical plans...

Samaritan X by Joe Michael Straczynski was to have been an original graphic novel set in the confines of Gotham's central hospital dealing with superhuman injuries and starting a number of plotlines that would have continued into the other DC universe books. It would have been a creator owned book but set within DC continuity and using DC characters. *Samaritan X* would have been founded by one Dr Francis Long, secretly married to an eternally young Lady Eternal and a Dr. Steven Montoya, trying to keep people alive before the specialists get to them. It would have also featured a Dr Felix Rose, who specialises in how superpowers work. This project seemed doomed by the New DCU... but there's always hope it could return.

Neil Gaiman and Michael Zulli's *Sweeney Todd the Demon Barber of Fleet Street* was to have appeared in Steve Bissette's *Taboo* anthology of horror stories. Indeed, an insert comic featuring a preamble in which Gaiman and Zulli wander around the locations that comic book was to have been set in was included in *Taboo #7*. But the graphic novel never came together and *Taboo* ceased publication.



Warren Ellis has a few to his name, too. *Morning Dragons* was to have been Warren Ellis and Steve Lieber's comic that, basically, pitched samurai against Vikings and tried to pick up the pieces afterwards. Much promoted, amid a blitz of Ellis projects, we got a cover and nothing else. The same

fate was suffered by a sequel to Greg Horn's *J.U.D.G.E.* that was plotted in full by Ellis. He also planned a political sci-fi conspiracy investigation, *The Operation*, with Phil Hester and Ande Parks for Oni Press. *New Universal* was partially finished and published but then cancelled after serial delays caused by the explosion of his computer. Other comics to be caught in the blast included Avatar's *Doktor Sleepless* and sequels to *Anna Mercury*. Ellis and Colleen Doran's *Stealth Tribes*, was a sci-fi cloudsourcing cyberpunk original graphic novel. Officially, Colleen is still drawing it for Vertigo...

Also for Oni Press was *Everest* by Greg Rucka and Scott Morse, that got previewed in a Free Comic Book Day comic, telling the story of a climb up the mountain. It is still planned, nine years after it was announced...

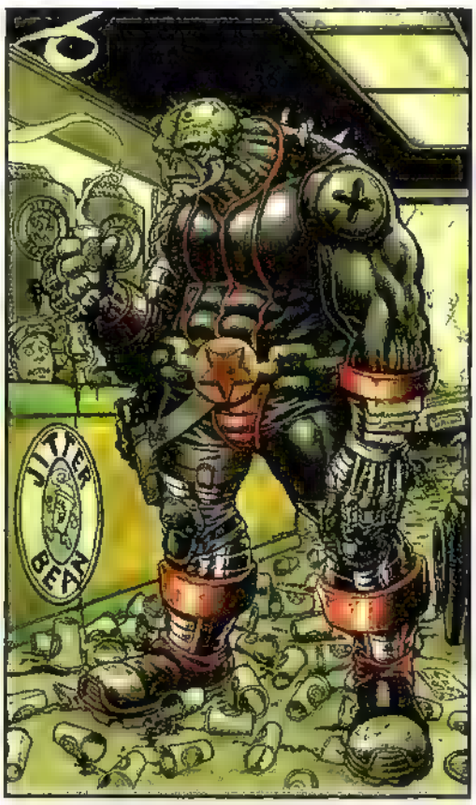
Captain America White was to have been Jeph Loeb and Tim Sale's follow on to *Daredevil Yellow, Spider-Man Blue* and *Hulk Gray*, set during Captain America and Bucky's wartime days. A zero issue was published a week after the 4th July in 2008, containing a sixteen page story and an interview with the pair about the project, but since then... nothing. It must be somewhere...

Kevin Smith has *Batman: Widening Gyre* and *Daredevil: Target* incomplete, but his *Spider-Man* ongoing with Terry Dodson never even got published, after their delayed-but-published *Spider-Man: Black Cat* mini-series.

Ed Brubaker got two issues into what he thought was his best Batman arc, introducing a new villain. Ryan Sook had drawn the first issue, when it was decided Ryan should be drawing *Hawkman* instead. And that was how Ed Brubaker quit *Detective Comics*. Somewhere in a drawer at DC is the first issue of a six part arc that will never be finished.

Jeph Loeb and J Scott Campbell also have a Spider-Man collaboration that has been promised for many years. Campbell is still, it seems, working on the comic.

Jae Faeber pitched a legal/private investigator comic series starring She-Hulk and Luke Cage to Marvel, well before Dan Slott's She Hulk book, called *Hard Cases*, described as "*The Practice* meets *Midnight Run*" in the Marvel Universe. It has been described as, "Jennifer Walters, a.k.a. The She-Hulk, is an attorney specializing in civil and criminal cases involving superhumans. Luke Cage, a super-strong ex-con and 'Hero For Hire,' is her primary investigator. So while Jen is battling it out in court, Luke is battling it out on the streets, tracking down elusive witnesses, locating perps, and, when necessary, knocking a few skulls together."



It was believed that *Deathlok: Detour* by Daniel Way and Darick Robertson was cancelled because it got in the way of a possible Deathlok movie. Still, it has been ten years since this was pulled from the schedules just before publication.

Fifteen years ago, Dave Elliott was set to write a series for DC Comics under the banner *Purgatory*. It was going to run 36 months and be two 64-page comics every month. The two books released two weeks apart would be in anthology format set in real time. The stories in the comics would have dates referred to that would be on or around the on-sale dates. Over the course of three years starting in 1997, he would have watched the end of an entire universe as the world ends taking heroes and villains with it.

The plan was it to be a very character driven piece. Some characters would find out before others what was happening and would try to stop it. He got as far as contracts and an advance then Paul Levitz changed his mind at the very last minute after he'd already started recruiting creators.

Hellboy: Darkness Calls had its first issue completed in its entirety by Lee Bermejo. But due to a mixture of time-lines and style, Duncan Fegredo came on board to redraw the first issue and then draw the rest of the series.

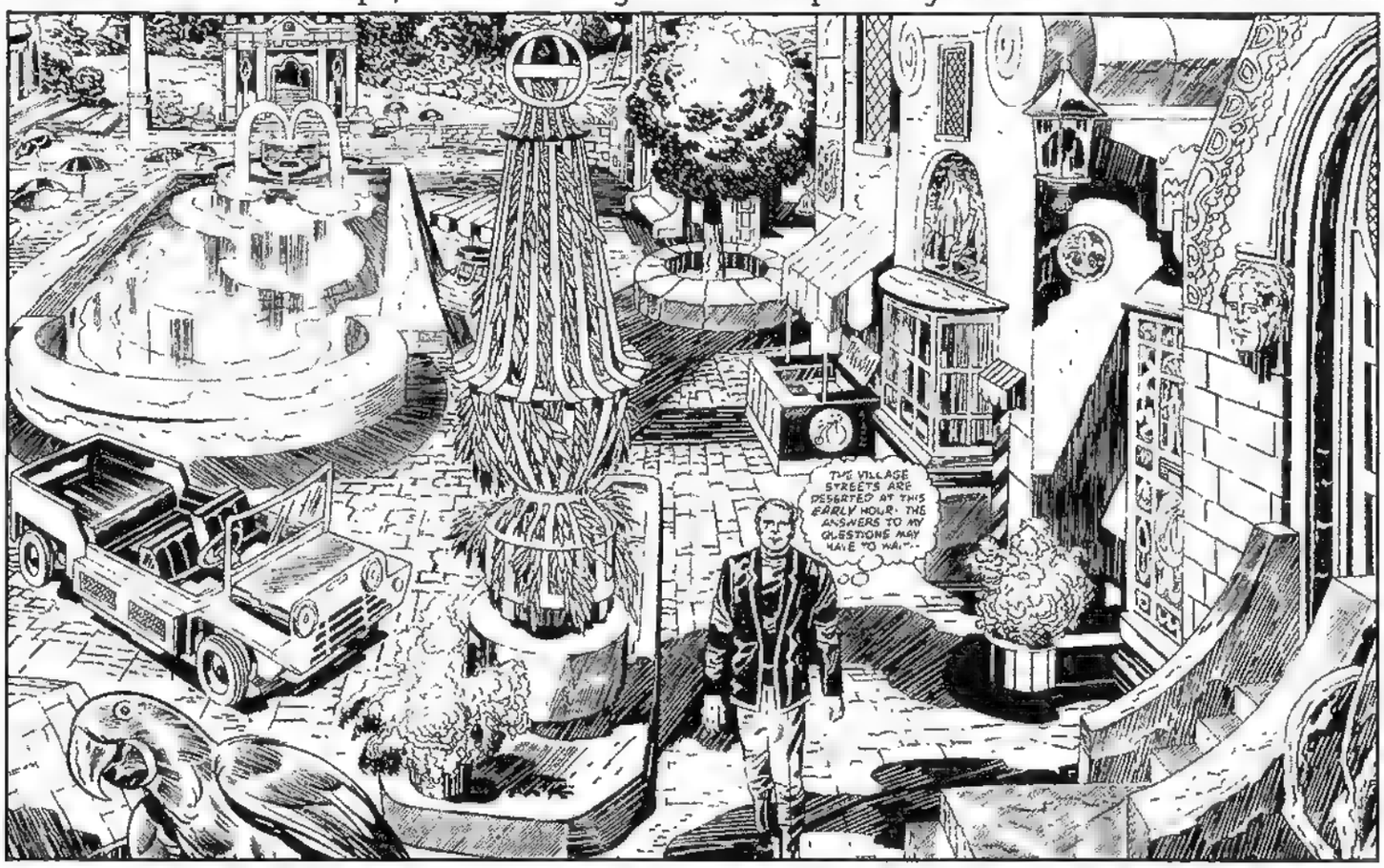
Drusilla: Run and Catch by Juliet Landau, Cliff Richards, and Tim Seeley was a Buffy spinoff all lined up, announced and promoted but... never happened. And was replaced by other Buffy spinoff books instead. We've never really had an explanation of why this was killed in mid-production.

Jack Kirby's adaptation and reworking of *The Prisoner* TV series as a comic was never finished, or published, but it did tie into his feelings of being trapped within corporate publishing. Like Number Seven of the show, Kirby had also "quit," but then found himself unable to escape, and returning to Marvel.

More recently, Boom has a prequel to *The Godfather* all lined up with licence rights to the movie actors, and Greg Scott drawing the comic... but Francis Ford Coppola killed it over a slow two years of delays. The graphic novel and a mini-series were planned to be published in 2007.

Garth Ennis and Steve Dillon's *City Lights* was meant to be a slice-of-life original graphic novel by the pair for DC Vertigo, reflective of their *Hellblazer* spinoff *Borderlands* more than anything else. And it still is. But DC Vertigo's contract changes suddenly made this project less economically attractive for the pair and it has been put on the back burner... for ten years now. It was most recently scheduled for 2011. No news for some time now.

Then there was Morrison, Milligan and Hewlett's *Bizarre Boys*, a Vertigo project from the creators of *The Invisibles, Shade The Changing Man* and *Gorillaz*. It's one of those comics that hurts so much from its non-existence. Apparently, when pitched, it was just too sex obsessed. These days it would probably be fine for the DC Universe...



Justice League/Transformers was to be written and drawn entirely by Phil Jimenez but like many other projects at DC Comics, was knocked aside for the New 52.

Christopher Gage's *Sunset* was on The Black List for some time but they eventually released it last year. Other books in that division may include *Cell Division* and *Genius* by Freeman and Marc Bernardin.

Marc Silvestri has a couple of stories that have been circling getting published for quite some time. A comic called *Midway Earth* (a sci-fi fantasy epic) and a comic concept he created with Mike Turner back in the day called *Gravity*. And, yes, it involves a young attractive lady. Possibly with breasts large enough to attract anything in their orbit.

Yellow Submarine, based on the Beatles movie, was to have been a comic book project at Dark Horse with Neil Aspinal that all fell apart.

We've seen Grace Randolph's *Supurbia*. But before that, she pitched *The Feminist And The Doll*, teaming the bright breezy superhero teenager The Doll and her co-star, the embittered, annoyed and jealous Feminist. As she described, " It deals with the lack of camaraderie between women, daddy issues, and all those other fun feminist issues! And of course we've got some guys thrown in for good measure!"

Night Radio was to have been an anthology series containing work by Warren Ellis, Matt Fraction, Antony Johnston, Micaela Petersen and edited by Ellis. A proto-version of the *CliNT* we'd have from Mark Millar, but published as a traditional comic book from Avatar Press. I understand a number of strips were started and completed but never actually came together in the right place and right time.

Matt Fraction also has another two comics, *Thug* with Kieron Dwyer and *Hotel Futura* with Fabio Moon planned for Image. Still no sign...

Jim Krueger' and Brett Weldele's *Last Straw Man* was to have been published by

Image Comics back in 2004, and was solicited as a three issue mini-series for this western comic, "where one man's dying body threatens to consume his soul as well... their story of Miles Pander, a man with a deceased mother, a missing father, a stolen love ... and tuberculosis. Broken, desperate, and looking ahead to nothing but death, Pander resolves to fill his final days with vengeance, regardless of the consequences." Never happened.

Barry Windsor-Smith started an epic *The Real Robin Hood* graphic novel, but shelved in in favour of painting back in the eighties. His *Monster* graphic novel, originally a Hulk comic for Marvel, progressed for years at Vertigo but was cancelled as there was no sign of it reaching a conclusion, with over 200 pages written and drawn.

Frank Cho's *Guns And Dinos* never actually made it to publication, due to increased Marvel work, but it might actually happen this year. But *Zombie King* stalled after the first zero issue.

Warchild by Alan Moore. Yes, that's a big one. The series script was bought by Rob Liefeld. It hasn't progressed publication because he says he hasn't found an artist who is up to the script. My suggestion that he just get Eddie Campbell didn't go down well...

A *Phoenix* mini-series (or two) by Chris Claremont and Rick Leonardi was referenced in various *Excalibur* issues but never saw the light. I was mystified at the time. It was to reveal what happened to Rachel Summers while she was in Mojoworld, as the severely injured Phoenix was lured into a trap set by Spiral. While there, Rachel would be haunted by her past and her betrayal of the X-Men. At least one issue was fully pencilled.

A second *Longshot* mini by Ann Nocenti and Art Adams was intended to be published by Marvel, to tell the story of why Longshot left the X-Men book shortly before Uncanny X-Men #250.

Dave Stevens was supposed to do a series called *Mimi Rodin*. A pin-up appeared in the back of DHP #100, but that's all we saw.

Gary Ushaw wrote a well-received series for Vertigo, *Mobfire*. He then sold a *Dreaming* story to Vertigo, which was never published. And Gary Ushaw was never heard from again...

Frank Miller's *JESUS!* was supposed to be a more historical take on Jesus, and both Simon Bisley and Rob Liefeld have Jesus-based projects, with varying levels of completion. Liefeld's is about zombies, rising after Jesus is crucified. It's Biblically sourced and everything.

Matt Wagner's *The Hero Denied* was meant to be the final volume of *Mage*. He hasn't started on it yet...

The Big Book of Wild Women was written by Susan Barrows, writing as Suzie The Floozie, as past of DC's Paradox's *Big Book* line. The book was completed and solicited in 2001 and then... disappeared. Still not officially cancelled, but awaiting publication, individual artists were told the book was no longer being published. Artists included Mary Fleener, Lea Hernandez, Max Douglas, Jimmy Palmiotti, Colleen Doran, Amanda Connor, Gregory Benton, Eric Shanower, Steve Lieber, Pia Guera, David Roach, Seth Fisher, Philip Bond and Minnie Moore. The imprint that formed it is all but dead and buried.

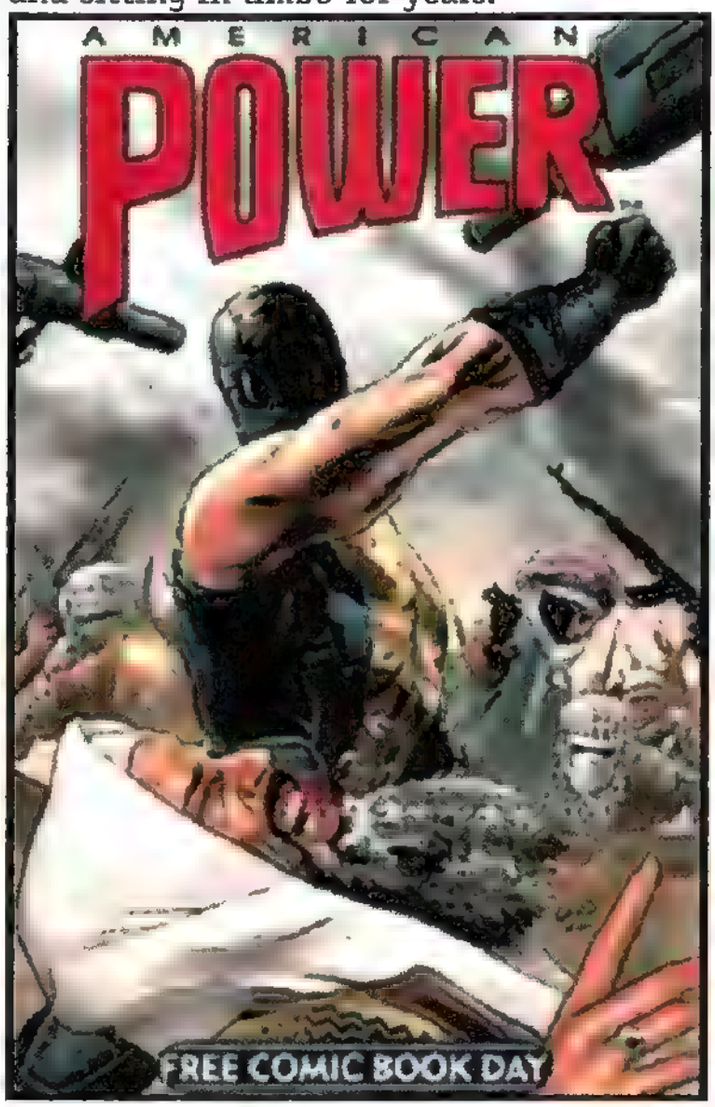
The All Star line from DC has had a few hiccups. Adam Hughes' *All Star Wonder Woman* was announced three years ago. And then put on the back burner after Hughes suffered a hand injury. Still being worked on, but it's no longer a priority. Not for DC anyway. Your mileage may differ.

Announced shortly after was Geoff Johns and JG Jones' *All Star Batgirl*, linking Barbara Gordon to Arkham Asylum. *All Star Green Lantern*, despite being announced, never even got a creative team attached.

Then there's comic book fan Nick Locking's and Jeremy Lock's *Robocop: Simple Machines* from 2004. Commissioned by Avatar, written by Nick, drawn by Jeremy and then... nothing. Say, who has the Robocop license now anyway?

Bryan Singer was meant to have written an arc for *Ultimate X-Men*. It never happened. At least Jon Favreau got a couple of issues of *Iron Man: Viva Las Vegas* before that also disappeared.

The Bernie Wrightson/Kevin Nowlan Solomon Grundy one-shot has been done and sitting in limbo for years.



It had a rather mocked cover, but *American Power* from Chuck Dixon and Greg Land has threatened repeatedly to be revived since. Sadly there has been no news... Weirdly, I was once asked if I could write a plot for someone who thought they might get the title and the cover – but nothing else. That never came to pass either.

Mark Millar and Ashley Wood's *Run* for Millarworld/Image would have kicked off a series of one shots from Millar and other artists, but they didn't happen either. Also *Civil War* stopped Millar and McNiven's

Ultimate Captain America from happening. And just how much of *Wanted* came from the never-published *Society of Super-Villains?*

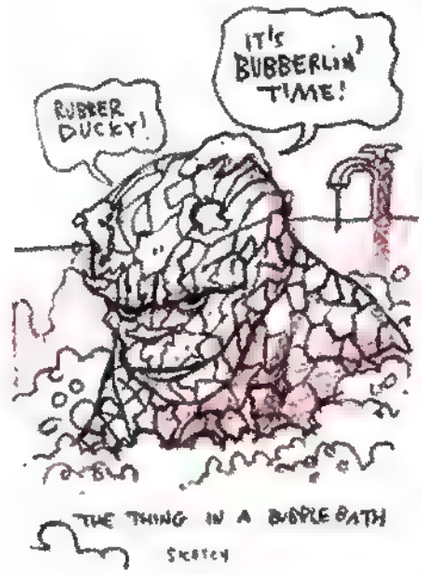
Or, how about this pitch by Brendan McCarthy for *The Fabulous Four...* He told me that it was to be "an alternative history based on Stan Lee's original name for the FF. Set in the 60s, the storyline involved trapping Galactus inside Eternity as a kind of infinite prison. I based Reed Richards on Stan Lee's vintage look of the period."

One thing to remember, as you weep into your longboxes, is that every now and then a comic leaves The Black Bolt List and actually gets published. From the final issues of *Quantum & Woody*, to Christopher Gage's *Sunset*, to Alan Moore's *Fashion Beast...* all have been featured on versions of this list in the past. Even *Multiversity* looks like it is finally on the way. So, you know, don't give up hope...

THE FABULOUS FOUR

Quick Sketches

In the early 60's Stan Lee briefly toyed with the title, 'The Fabulous Four' but wisely settled on 'The Fantastic Four'. These are designs for a pitch for a miniseries for Marvel which was set in 1967. I had Reed Richards looking like Stan from that era, Invisible Girl as a hippy chick and Johnny Storm as a reactionary rocker.



STAR TREK: THIS GENERATION

by Rick Verbanas

In 2009, *Star Trek* was reborn for an all-new generation of fans, thanks to an amazing reboot by J.J. Abrams, best known at the time for his television series *Alias* and *Lost*. While some die-hard Trek fans may feel a bit betrayed, as there are reports Abrams will be directing the first Disney Star Wars film, *Episode VII*, in 2015, they cannot deny what Abrams has meant to the revitalization of the Star Trek franchise. Now, with the sequel *Into Darkness* opening in a couple of months, the original crew of the USS Enterprise is again at the forefront of pop-culture, after decades of languishing trying to find new fans.

The original Star Trek television series debuted in 1966 and ran for three seasons. However, the franchise didn't find it's greatest popularity until later in syndication. Originally developed as a second series with the original cast, Paramount couldn't get it's new television network off the ground, and decided to produce *Star Trek* as motion pictures. The movies were successful, and they went on to make five more with the original cast, with creator Gene Roddenberry serving as an executive consultant.

With the cast getting older, Roddenberry hoped to strike gold again with a new series set 100 years later, *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. Running from 1987 to 1994, the second *Star Trek* television series met both critical and financial success. In fact, three more television series came out after Roddenberry's death in 1991; *Star Trek: Deep Space Nine* (1993–1999), *Star Trek: Voyager* (1995–2001), and *Star Trek: Enterprise* (2001–2005).

Yet, there have always been whispers of a reboot to the original series. Classic characters like Captain James T. Kirk and the half-Vulcan Spock are internationally known and have been immortalized in comic books, novels, action figures, memorabilia, and anything you can stick an image on. There is a history here that is ripe for exploring and introducing to new fans.

On the other side, there are generations of loyal fans – Trekkies, if you will – who love the characters and the cast that played them, and do not want some sort of dismissal of the 40+ years of stories that went before just for the sake of a younger cast.

And this is where writers Roberto Orci and Alex Kurtzman, and director J.J. Abrams nailed it with the *Star Trek* reboot in 2009.

The plot to the reboot was simple. By creating a reality-jumping villain set on eliminating Spock, we are introduced to an alternate universe/timeline and get acquainted with the original characters all over again played by a new cast. So, the original universe existed and always will, while another starts over from scratch, free to make changes along the way.

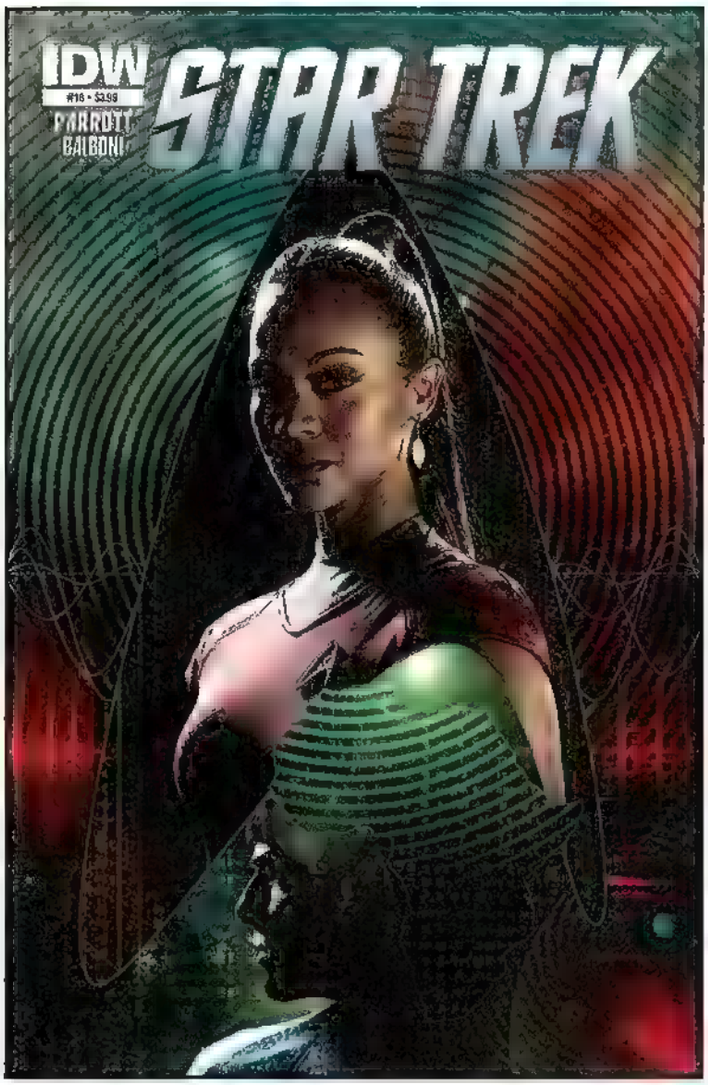
Voila! You keep the legions of fans from the original series happy by respecting what

came before and staying true to the essence to the characters in the new versions, and you introduce brand new audiences to a kick-butt story that appeals to today's standards. Consider it, "Ultimate *Star Trek*," if you will.

To further get the blessing from the die-hard Trekkies, you have Spock "Prime" (played by the original actor, Leonard Nimoy) meet and approve of the new Spock (played by Zachary Quinto). Brilliant.

Star Trek (2009) grossed over $385,000,000 worldwide and met with tremendous fan approval and a franchise was reborn. The sequel, *Into Darkness*, debuts this May.

IDW Publishing, who secured the publishing rights to Star Trek in 2006, published several Star Trek comics, including a *Year Four* mini-series picking up where the original television series left. They had great success with a prequel leading up to the 2009 reboot, called *Countdown*, as well as a mini-series that focused on the movie's main villain, Nero.



Realizing the new generation of fans created (or re-energized) by the new movie were hungry for more adventures of Kirk, Spock and the Enterprise, IDW launched a new on-going series in Fall of 2011, reimagining stories from the original television series with likenesses of the new cast.

While the first twelve issues of the ongoing series were primarily inspired by the Original Series television episodes, the comic series changed focus to spotlighting members of the Enterprise's crew with #13.

Scott Dunbier, Editor for IDW's *Star Trek* comics, shared why they decided to change the format leading up to *Into Darkness*. "We'll continue to do stories inspired by original episodes, but we also wanted to tell other types of stories," he explained.

However, fans of the characters will not get stories rehashing information that has already come before.

"They can expect to learn new things about old friends," Dunbier promised. "These are stories with heart that take some pretty pronounced twists and turns - one of the many advantages of playing with a divergent timeline. Mike [Johnson] is a very talented writer. He has lots of great ideas. He wants to explore this new version of the *Star Trek* universe. Who wouldn't?"

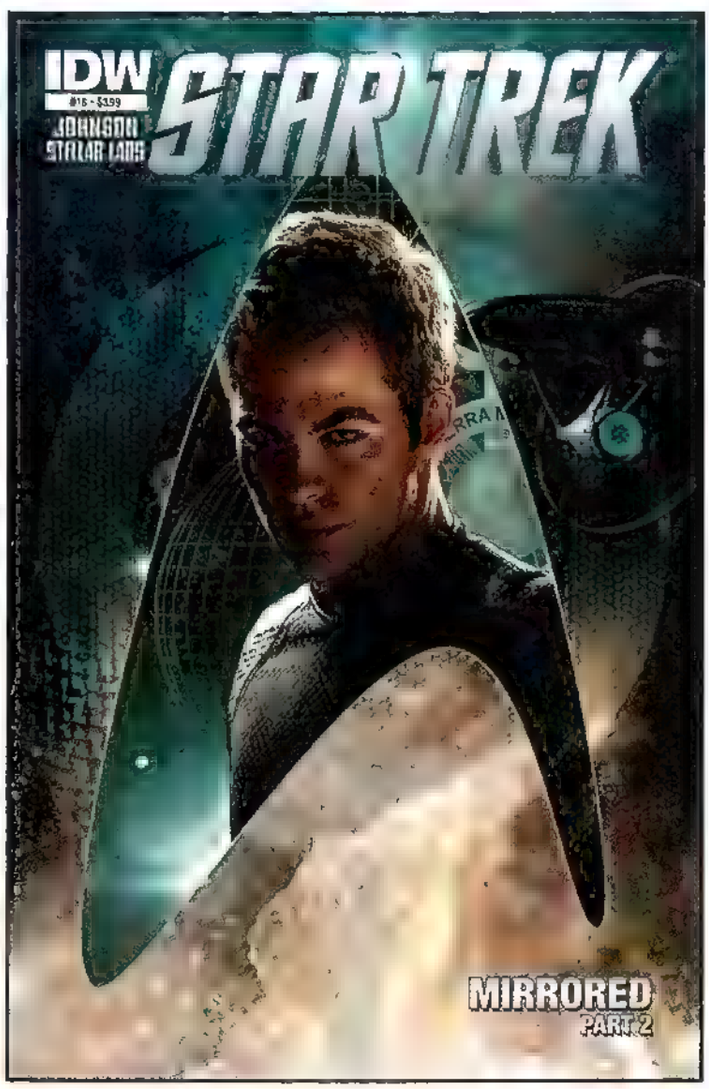
Mike Johnson, also known for his work on *Superman Batman* and *Supergirl* for DC Comics, is no Red Shirt when it comes to writing about the Enterprise and it's crew, as he now has several *Star Trek* comics under his belt. Prior to launching the ongoing series, Johnson wrote the prequel to the 2009 movie, *Star Trek: Countdown*, the *Star Trek - The Official Motion Picture Adaptation*, as well as *Star Trek: Nero*, focusing on the villain from the first film. Johnson is a child of the '70s and '80s. For him, writing for Star Trek has been a dream come true.

"I've been a Star Trek fan since I saw re-runs of the original episodes," admitted Johnson. "And I grew up seeing all of the original films in the theaters."

For Johnson, his love for Star Trek goes beyond aliens, starships and phasers set on stun, though. "I think what attracts me the most to Trek," he shared, "Is that, unlike other sci-fi and fantasy titles, Star Trek is about us. It's about our future, our potential as a species, and it contains an inherent optimism that is harder and harder to find in our world."

Working along with Johnson is *Star Trek* film writer and producer Roberto Orci. Together, they collaborate on translating the film's vision into the graphic form.

"Bob and I work out how the new stories will branch out and differ from the original timeline," Johnson explained. "Bob knows more about Star Trek than anyone, and he's able to combine his fan love with his role as one of the new architects of Trek. It's invaluable to have someone involved in the



films also involved in the comics, because it allows us to really tie everything together in a way other comics adaptations can't."

While new fans created from the 2009 movie will get to experience many of the familiar Star Trek themes told before, fans of the original series needn't worry about reading the same old stories. Like J.J. Abrams' reboot, the comics will explore strange new worlds, with a twist.

"The idea is like playing cover versions of classic songs," Johnson said as an analogy. "The fun comes from seeing familiar stories and characters in a new light, and showing how slight changes between the two universes can have dramatically different outcomes. We work hard to honor the integrity of the original stories without blindly repeating what's already come before."

Like *Countdown* in 2009, fans can expect to get an idea of what the Star Trek sequel will encompass, with the comic prequel, *Star Trek: Countdown to Darkness*.

"As with the original *Countdown* series, we are working hard to create the feeling of a movie on the page," explained Johnson. "The hope is that you get a cinematic experience in the comic that feels like a valuable companion to the film, and enhances your understanding and enjoyment of the movie."

Johnson, who had the privilege of being on the set of the 2009 film – and even sat in Kirk's Captain Chair when no one was looking – didn't make it back for the filming of *Into Darkness*. "I had a standing invite to visit, but this time I was so busy writing, by the time I looked up, the sets had been struck and principal photography was over," lamented Johnson. "I'm kicking myself for it. But, on the plus side, I'm looking forward to seeing the completed film with fresh eyes, so to speak."

And he is not alone, as a new generation of fans will be watching with those same fresh eyes. *Star Trek: Into Darkness* opens May 17th in the USA and UK.

Big! Bold! BOOM!

An interview with BOOM! Studios EIC: Matt Gagnon

By *James Kuhoric*

BIG! BOLD! BOOM!

by James Kuhoric

We know BOOM! Studios from the weekly comics they publish... but who really are the guys and gals making the decisions behind titles like *Adventure Time, Hellraiser, Planet of the Apes, Deathmatch,* and *2 Guns*? What is the process they use for deciding which creators to bring in and how did they get Clive Barker to write the new *Hellraiser*? How did they turn an original creation into a big movie deal and just who is this Matt Gagnon fella who seems to be at the epicenter of one of indie comics most aggressive publishers? We talked with the third year Editor-in-Chief of BOOM! Studios to get the lowdown on his role, their publishing line, and the surprises they have in store for readers in 2013...

FOR THE UNINITIATED, WHO IS MATT GAGNON?

Now that's an existential question to start off with. You don't mess around, Jim! [Laughs] As you said, I've been the Editor-in-Chief for almost three years. I'm a lifelong comic book reader and a devotee of the medium. Been living the comic book life for a while now.

In broad terms, I started out at BOOM! as an editor working primarily on our original series and licenses like *Farscape*. I was promoted to Managing Editor shortly thereafter, at which point I got the trains running on time and made my bones on titles like *Irredeemable* and *Incorruptible*. Over the years, I've developed the editorial bullpen and our style/processes for how we operate. As EIC, I'm head of creative and oversee the company's editorial. I absolutely love what I do.

Outside of work? I'm a devoted husband, an aging hockey defenseman, a voracious reader of crime/mystery/thriller novels, a mercurial writer, and an occasional TV junkie. I also have a soft spot for the Old West, but that's a different story.

AT BOOM!, YOU ARE THE MAN BEHIND THE SCENES DEVELOPING THE TITLES. HOW DO YOU DECIDE WHICH PROJECTS AND LICENSES ARE THE NEXT ONES TO BE DEVELOPED ON THE SCHEDULE?

We have a very collaborative office over here. Most of our staff is pretty young and made up of a diverse, intelligent group of people with varied tastes. A lot of the licenses we choose simply come out of discussions about things that we love. I believe that you need to have an affinity for the material you publish or it's not worth pursuing. It needs to start there. The best way we can respect our readership is to deliver stories that are authentic and satisfying.

In short, we make a lot of the decisions based on if it's something we're excited about and feel like we can translate to comics in an interesting way.

BOOM! Studios has fantastic licensed comics to innovative creator owned titles to a robust all-ages line. How have you managed to find such a strong balance in your editorial line?

It's taken years - a lot of hard work and discipline. Ross Richie, the Founder/CEO of BOOM! Studios, started the company with a vision of publishing a wide variety of material. That's one of the reasons that I came to BOOM! in the first place. I believe comic books as a medium and an industry needs to be running the gamut in terms of what genres are being published.

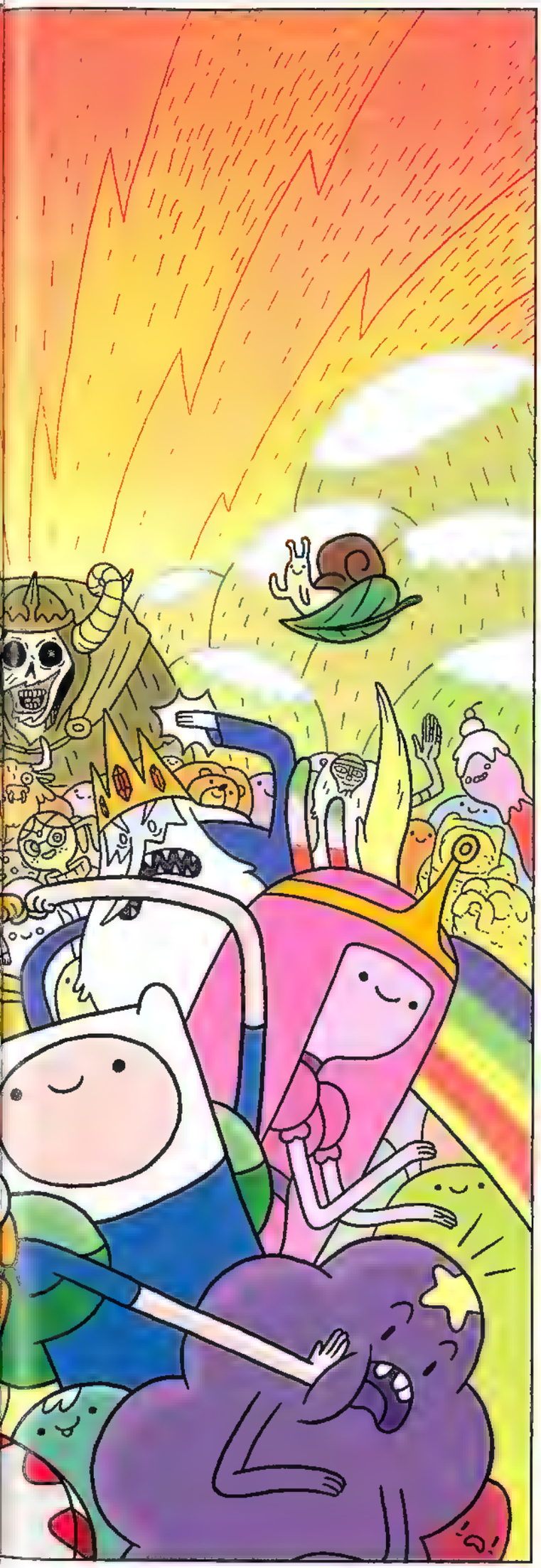
That type of diversity is present in mass media entertainment mediums like film and television, and I want the same thing for comics. Roughly half of our output is licensed comics - branded entertainment - and the other half is original material. It'll shift a little heavier from one end to the other from time to time, but we're always careful about having a thoughtful balance. We enjoy publishing both types of comics.

When it comes to all-ages comics, that's something we've always been passionate about. I can't imagine there are many more worthy endeavors than fostering a new generation of readers for this medium.

BOOM!'s licensing line is focused on a handful of titles, but each has been superb and getting critical acclaim. *Planet of the Apes* and *Hellraiser* are series that are true to the source material, highly praised, and expand the cannon with gruesome effectiveness. What is your secret to this success?

My perspective on licensed comics that I use all the time is this: I don't want to just publish a *Planet of the Apes* comic book, I want to publish the best *Planet of the Apes* comic book.

This is true of everything that we publish. I loathe licensed material that's done poorly. There's a way to develop these comics



that's additive, uses the advantages of the comic book medium, and delivers quality in spades. I've been on a personal mission to change the way people think about licensed comics. Whether it's *Planet of the Apes, Hellraiser, 28 Days Later, Adventure Time, Peanuts, Garfield*, or any of the other licensed comics we've published, we're constantly aiming to raise the bar on quality.

We're earning a reputation for publishing the best licensed comics and I can't tell you how gratifying it is to see that hard work being recognized. Not long ago I had a prominent retailer tell me that he wished some licenses at other companies were in our hands; it meant a lot to receive that feedback.

KA-BOOM! HAS QUIETLY PUT TOGETHER AN EXCITING ALL-AGES LINE IN COMICS. *ADVENTURE TIME* HAS CAPTURED THE IMAGINATION OF COMIC FANS YOUNG AND OLD. AND THE CREATION OF NEW *PEANUTS* COMICS HAS GIVEN US NEW CHARLIE BROWN ADVENTURES AFTER THE PASSING OF BELOVED CREATOR, CHARLES SCHULZ. WITH CARTOON NETWORK'S REGULAR SHOW ON THE WAY – WHAT OTHER SURPRISES CAN YOU FILL US IN ON FOR THE KA-BOOM! LINE IN THE UPCOMING MONTHS?

We're currently publishing *Adventure Time, Regular Show, Peanuts, Garfield,* and *Bravest Warriors* monthly. We also publish gorgeous *Ice Age* comics quarterly in an 8x8 format. And our first original series for Ka-BOOM!, *Snarked* by the great Roger Langridge, won the Eisner Award for Best Publication for Kids.

Right now we're developing some original series that we're very excited about and we have a couple other additions to the Ka-BOOM! family that we can't quite announce yet. But! I can tell you that in June we're launching new *Herobear & the Kid* comics by creator Mike Kunkel! *Herobear* is one of the best all-ages comics ever; it won the Eisner award in 2002 and 2003 back to back. It was

one of the first all-ages titles that really broke through at a time when there was virtually nothing in that space.

Mike is a powerful storyteller and the new *Herobear* comics he's creating are absolute magic. It'll be a triumphant return for one of the Direct Market's indie darlings.

IT SEEMS LIKE YOU'VE CRACKED THE CODE ON HOW TO POSITION WEBCOMIC CREATORS, EFFECTIVELY TAKING THEIR ONLINE POPULARITY AND TURNING IT INTO PRINT COMICS SUCCESS. HOW DID YOU DEVELOP THIS PROGRAM AND HOW DO YOU PLAN TO EXPAND IT COMING UP?

This is something I'm really proud of. Our senior editor in the Ka-BOOM! imprint, Shannon Watters, is passionate about webcomics and sort of opened the floodgates for webcomickers to participate on the *Adventure Time* series. I thought it was such an obvious and beautiful innovation - kind of brilliant in its simplicity. It perfectly complimented the spirit of the property. Shannon used to be my assistant, and I was fortunate enough to mentor her, so I'm naturally predisposed to take pride in all of her accomplishments. [Laughs]

The whole thing turned into this movement of a sorts, an industry event. We're still very much in the midst of our "webcomic invasion," so there's plenty more to see every month. Pick up *Regular Show*, in particular, if you're interested in seeing what's next.

It's so much fun to empower the diversity and breadth of talent that these creators bring. I started reading webcomics back when Derek Kirk Kim was doing *Same Difference* and computers were steam-powered. [Laughs] A lot has changed!

BOOM! HAS TAKEN STRONG CREATORS LIKE ANDY LANNING, DAN ABNETT, PAUL JENKINS, SI SPURRIER, AND GRACE RANDOLPH, AND GIVEN THEM A FORUM TO CREATE VIBRANT WORLDS BY DOING WHAT THEY DO BEST. THE RESULTING BOOKS – *DEATHMATCH*, *HYPERNATURALS*, *SUPURBIA*, AND *EXTERMINATION* – ARE GETTING A LOT OF ATTENTION AND PRAISE IN THE MARKET. WHAT OTHER NEW TITLES DO YOU HAVE IN DEVELOPMENT THAT USE THIS APPROACH?

All the creators you just mentioned are amazing to work with. We have some more projects cooking with many of them. In fact, we're developing something new with Si right now and it's completely wild (in a good way).

One of the things I'm most excited about is a new ongoing series we're doing with Mike Carey in May. I've been a fan of Mike's work forever and have been dying to work with him. We were trying to put something together for years and the stars finally aligned. Mike is a singular talent and a hell of a nice guy. I couldn't be more excited to get this into people's hands. The comic, *Suicide Risk*, is this mind-bending, high-octane superhero comic where nothing is what is seems.

We're also launching a new original series with Clive Barker. It'll be the first time Clive has created and written an original series in comics. It's going to be huge. The series is a 12-part epic called *New Genesis*. The basic concept is this: a man unearths God on an archeological excavation only to find that God has been hidden from man for a very good reason. To put it lightly... He's not very nice. [Laughs] Clive is a flat-out creative genius and it's an honor that he's entrusted us with his original creation.

Telling new stories is something we really believe in and will always be committed to.

WHAT IS IN STORE FOR BOOM! THIS YEAR?

2013 is the year we plan on banging the drum loudly and inviting more fans of the medium to join us on our mission. This is a big year for us. We're expanding all areas of our publishing, and doing it in an organic way that stays true to who we are. We love comics. There's

a lot of fire and passion at this company for what we do. There's never a time that we're not looking to innovate and set the bar higher.

Outside of publishing, our first feature film comes out this year from Universal. *2 Guns* is an action movie starring Mark Wahlberg, Denzel Washington, Bill Paxton, Paula Patton, Edward James Olmos and is directed by Baltasar Kormakur who did *Contraband* last year. The talent involved is pretty mind-blowing! It's based off our *2 Guns* comic book that was written by Steven Grant and drawn by Mateus Santolouco. We're really looking forward to that.

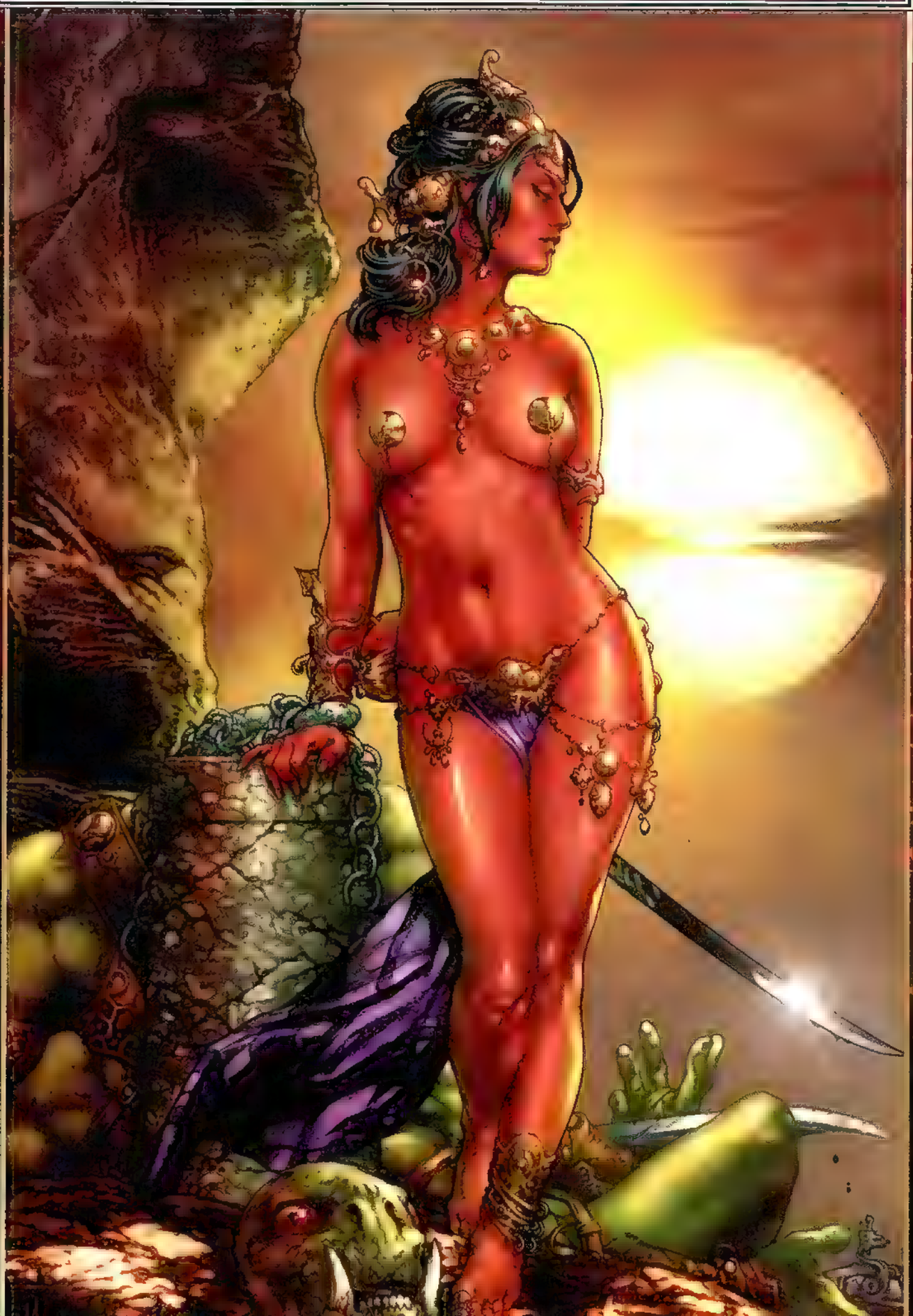
This is shaping up to be our best year yet. We're so thankful for our readership and all the industry support that we have. We'll be continuing to hold up our end of the bargain and work tirelessly to have a positive impact on this medium we all love.

MARK WAID'S
The GREEN HORNET
THE HORNET FACES HIS MOST DANGEROUS ENEMY EVER...HIMSELF
ALL-NEW ISSUE #1 WRITTEN BY MARK WAID
ART BY DANIEL INDRO COVER BY PAOLO RIVERA
FANS, ASK YOUR RETAILERS FOR THE ALEX ROSS SUBSCRIPTION EXCLUSIVE COVER, THE PAOLO RIVERA "BLACK & WHITE ART" RETAILER INCENTIVE COVER AND THE ALEX ROSS "SKETCH ART" RETAILER INCENTIVE COVER.
SUBSCRIPTION EXCLUSIVE VARIANT!
DYNAMITE
WWW.DYNAMITE.COM
#DYNAMITECOMICS
/DYNAMITECOMICS
Dynamite, Dynamite Entertainment and its logo are ® and © 2012. All rights reserved.
Copyright © 2012 The Green Hornet, Inc. All rights reserved.

FROM THE PAGES OF WARLORD OF MARS

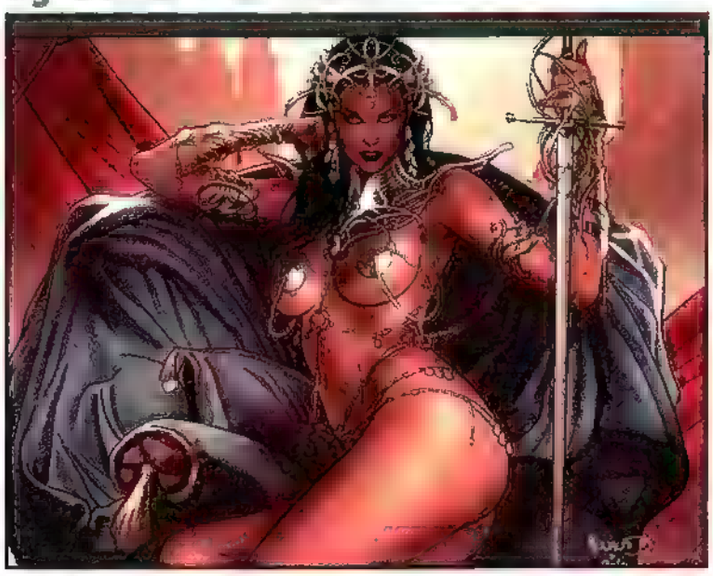
DEJAH THORIS AND THE WARLORD OF MARS

By *Keith Davidsen*



http://bcool.bz/bcm3-dejah

DEJAH THORIS
AND THE WARLORD OF MARS
by Keith Davidson



It's amazing to think that John Carter, the iconic protagonist of the *Warlord of Mars* series and the sci-fi genre's prototypical space hero, first appeared in print over a hundred years ago. One of Edgar Rice Burroughs' two most beloved characters (the other being *Tarzan, Lord of the Jungle*), John Carter appeared in stories that blended two-fisted adventure with exotic alien landscapes, serving as an antecedent for later fantasy epics (like Robert E. Howard's *Conan the Barbarian*) and serialized space adventures (*Flash Gordon, Buck Rogers*).

A century since Carter's first appearance in the novel *A Princess of Mars*, Dynamite Entertainment has breathed new life into the epic sci-fi fantasy, building a complex and thrilling franchise that faithfully continues the story of Burroughs' displaced Confederate soldier. Furthermore, Dynamite's creative talent has successfully taken Dejah Thoris, Carter's red-skinned love interest, and reinforced her status as a heroine worthy of her own ongoing series and spin-off projects.

We recently spoke with Robert Place Napton and Mark Rahner, two of the writers currently steering the *Warlord of Mars* franchise, regarding their respective *Dejah Thoris* adventures and the influence of Burroughs' space fantasy throughout the years.

Edgar Rice Burroughs and the Legacy of Mars

"Burroughs really popularized a new genre with John Carter," says Robert Place Napton, whose script work in recent issues of *Warlord of Mars*: Dejah Thoris have taken the strong and fearless princess to new heights of adventure and intrigue. "When the first novel was written, he really created the entire notion of 'planetary romance' – swords and exotic alien worlds, the blending of medieval and futuristic cultures – which would later inspire *Flash Gordon, Dune, Star Wars, James Cameron's Avatar*, and more."

Mark Rahner, author of the *Dejah Thoris and the Green Men of Mars* limited series, reinforces the sentiment of Burroughs' far-reaching impact to science fiction. "Nearly every corner of pop culture has Carter's DNA in it. Try to strip away everything you've watched and read, and think of what Burroughs put in his books starting in 1912. His imagination was phenomenal and prolific. Burroughs mixed adventure, violence, romance, friendship, and the concept of a fish-out-of-water dominating an alien culture, and that mix continues to resonate."

The rich tapestry of Martian cultures, juxtaposed against ages of bloodshed between the races, provides John Carter and Dejah Thoris with an endless reservoir of new adventures and character development. "Mars is a dying, savage world, a 'survival of the fittest' environment... but one with a strict code of conduct that its warriors adhere to," says Napton. "If someone is facing you with a sword on Mars, you are expected to put your Radium gun down, pull your sword, and fight them toe-to-toe. This presents so many opportunities for characters to reveal themselves by their actions, both good and bad."

With so much history and cultural influence, it's no wonder that Dynamite's creative talent has so successfully expanded the Warlord of Mars universe with two ongoing

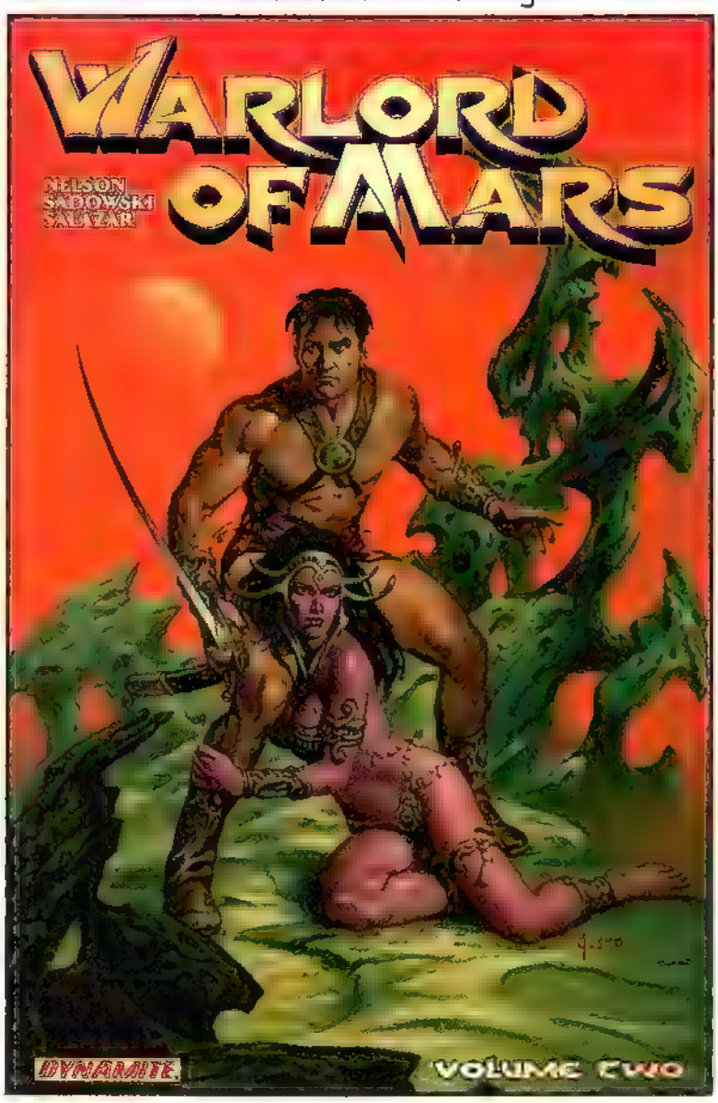
series, four spin-off miniseries, and a variety of related WOM and Dejah Thoris products since the original series debut in 2010.

Dejah Thoris: The Damsel Overcoming Distress

The heroine of the *Warlord of Mars* franchise is very complex. In many ways, she fulfills the literary trope of damsel in distress, most often because her natural curiosity and boldness leads her into precarious situations. Consider Mark Rahner's summary of her weaknesses: "She is not a superwoman and is not perfect... but that's okay, because that would make her boring. Dejah may get beaten up, scared, exhausted, or guilt-ridden when friends die because of her. Also, she's physically weaker than John Carter, the green-skinned Tharks, and many of the species of Mars."

However, the Princess of Mars far surpasses the damsel stereotype, as Rahner continues (with refreshing frankness), "She's got bigger balls than Carter, though. She's got nerve that's off-the-scale. Dejah Thoris can be a warrior, but she also relies a lot on intelligence and caginess. I see her as an exceptional woman."

Napton also chimed in regarding the perception and depths of the character. "There's no denying she's the original hot babe of science fiction. Burroughs described her as sans clothes in the books, so artists for decades have enjoyed depicting her. In fact, in the comics, we put more clothes on her than she had originally, which some people don't seem to understand. But there's more to her than just her beauty. She's very strong. She's no shrinking violet. Dejah can handle herself. Like everyone on Barsoom (the native name for Mars), she has to be strong to survive. She's the mold for such characters as Princess Leia and Neytiri of Avatar. She loves her home and her people, and would be willing to sacrifice everything for them. She does not wilt in the face of John Carter's charisma or strength – she is



every bit his equal."

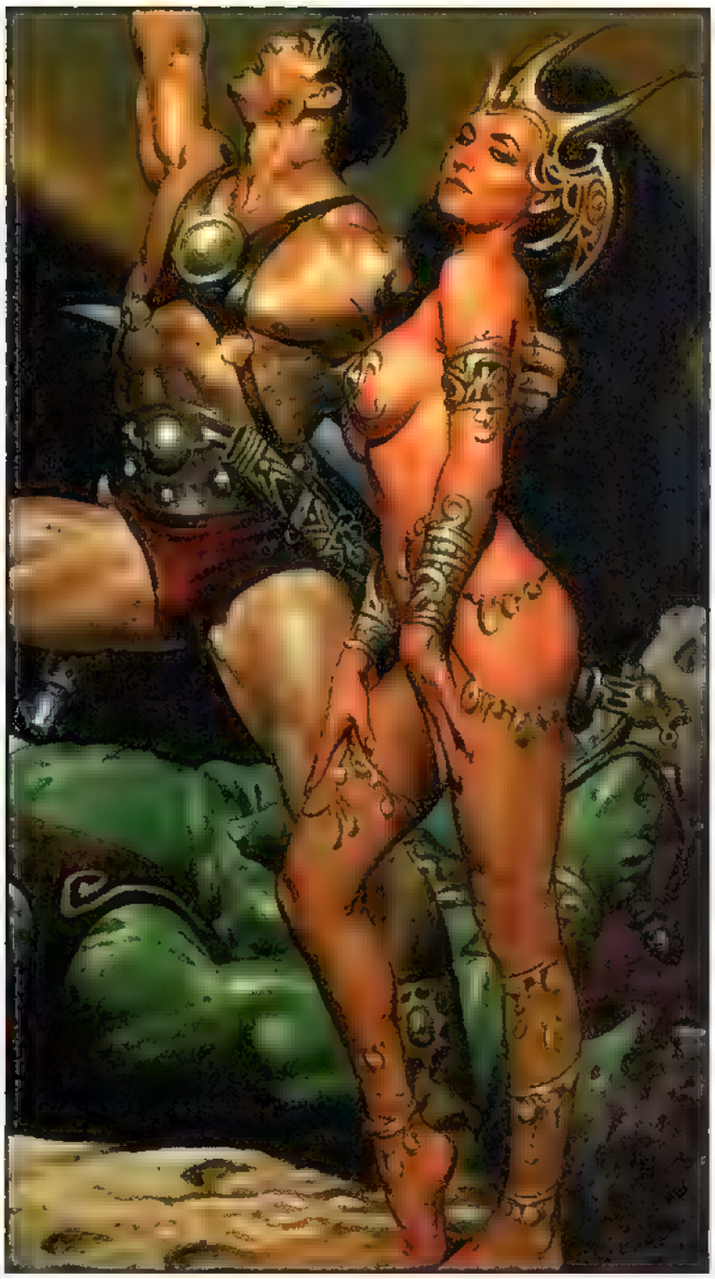
That's why the Dynamite Dejah Thoris titles are so unique – the titular heroine truly stands on her own two feet. Take any hero concept as decades-old as *Warlord of Mars*, and you'd historically find a female love interest that always takes the back seat to the male lead. Not so with Dejah Thoris. She arguably steals the limelight from John Carter time and time again.

"I'm less interested in a goddess that all men love than I am in a woman who shows character at a key moment," says Rahner. "Or, to put it another way, I would never define Dejah Thoris by her love for Carter. I always think that the best approach is to ask, what can she do in a given situation that best illustrates why Carter would love her so immortally?"

Further Exploring the Red Planet

Here's a look at the current Dejah Thoris projects by Napton and Rahner: *Dejah Thoris and the Green Men of Mars*, the four-issue miniseries by writer Mark Rahner and artist Lui Antonio, kicks off in February. It spirals directly out of Burroughs' original John Carter tale in the *Princess of Mars* novel, which Dynamite faithfully adapted as the first ten issues of the *Warlord of Mars* series. In *Green Men*, the heroine suffers through the memories of her past mistreatment by the barbaric Tharks. "At a time when she has to set an example to her people and keep a fragile new peace between the races of Mars, she's essentially an abuse survivor dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder and a lingering racism against the Green Men," says Rahner. The volatile history between Dejah and the Tharks sets the stage for a brutal confrontation between the princess and a hell bent band of Tharks whose long-savored taste for "red meat" remains intact!

Meanwhile, in the ongoing *Warlord of Mars: Dejah Thoris* series, Robert Place Napton has been working with artist Carlos Rafael on one epic storyline after another. "When I took over the writing chores, Dejah went through a dark and traumatic event where she lost her identity to a powerful sorceress. After that episode, she went on a self-imposed exile where she explored Barsoom on her own and accidentally got caught up in an invasion attempt by enemies from Saturn. Now she's back home, trying to bring to justice a criminal assassin who is wreaking havoc throughout the Red nations." Napton warns us to keep an eye out during the assassin storyline for a major revelation which will drastically shape the series' direction over 2013.



Dynamite's also publishes the original *Warlord of Mars* series, featuring John Carter, Dejah Thoris, and their son Carthoris.

VIPERS & CYLONS: THE ORIGINAL BATTLESTAR GALACTICA RETURNS

For every hardcore *Battlestar Galactica* fan who utters the curse "Frak!" or daydreams of hot blondes in the throes of passion with their spines glowing red, there's an equally fanatical BSG purist who longs for a return to halcyon days, when Cylons were made of cold steel and Starbuck was a smooth-talkin', womanizing Dirk Benedict.

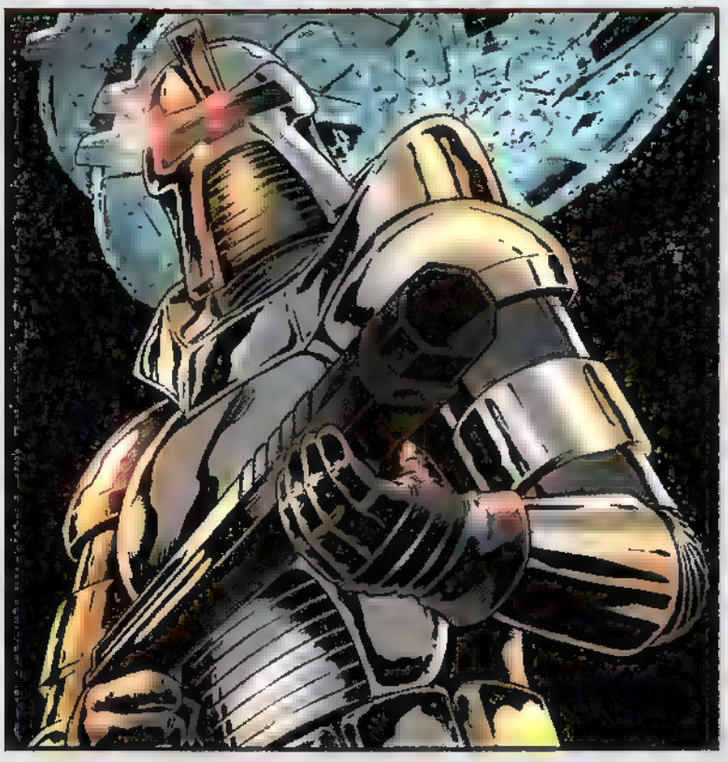
ABNETT & LANNING IN THE VIPER COCKPIT

To celebrate the 35th anniversary of the franchise, Dynamite Entertainment – who have produced an extensive library of *BSG* titles – will return to the retro roots with not one, but two series in 2013. And, to guarantee that the stakes, drama, and explosive action are worthy of the classic *Battlestar Galactica*, they've recruited writers Dan Abnett and Andy Lanning, whose previous collaborations have yielded such well-received cosmic fare as *Annihilation: Nova, Legion of Super-Heroes, War of Kings,* and *The Thanos Imperative*.

According to Dan Abnett, the first miniseries will feature "all the classic characters in a huge adventure celebrating the original *Galactica* and its legacy." His enthusiasm for the project – and the *BSG* universe itself – is clear. "We're all-out to capture the classic *BSG* vibe, and you'll see all your favourite characters. Retro is good!"

The second series will take place after the Galactica's long journey ended in Earth's orbit. "Set in our future, after the events of classic *BSG, Galactica 1980,* and the comics, it would show the consequences of the Galactica crew's interaction with Earth humans of the 13th Colony. It'll have big drama, big thrills, big surprises, and some great DnA-trademark world-building and extrapolation!" (The 'DnA' stands for Dan and Andy, naturally.)

ORIGINAL CYLONS RETURN!



Make no mistake, though there will be a modern sensibility (especially in the second series, set as it is in a world contemporary to ours), Abnett assures us that they do not intend to bridge the tonal gap between the 1978 and 2004 incarnations. "One thing I think we're pretty good at is handling, understanding, and being respectful to classic licenses." Case in point: the armored Cylons will take the forefront as series antagonists. "They are very cool indeed, classic and implacable foes. I think they stand proudly in the pantheon of great SF villains alongside both the Daleks and Cybermen in *Doctor Who*. It's the militaristic, warrior edge that makes them especially interesting."

NEW COMICS WITH CLASSIC GALACTICA!

"It's going to be great military SF adventure, with strong, strong characters, and a full-on thriller of a story, from a classic series that you'll either love because you always were a fan, or you'll adore because you'll find out what the fuss was about," says Abnett. "And, hell... Vipers, Cylon Raiders, and Battlestars... those three things alone should bring any SF fans running!"

The first Abnett & Lanning *Battlestar Galactica* series is scheduled to launch in June 2013, featuring a dynamic cover by industry legend Alex Ross.

See page 82 for more Battlestar Galactica!

CGC® For information on submitting your comic books call us or visit our website at CGCcomics.com!

P.O. Box 4738 | Sarasota, FL 34230 | 1-877-NM-COMIC (662-6642) | www.CGCcomics.com

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT LEADS THE WAY FOR ASPEN IN 2013
By Chris Arrant

EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT LEADS THE WAY FOR ASPEN IN 2013

by Chris Arrant

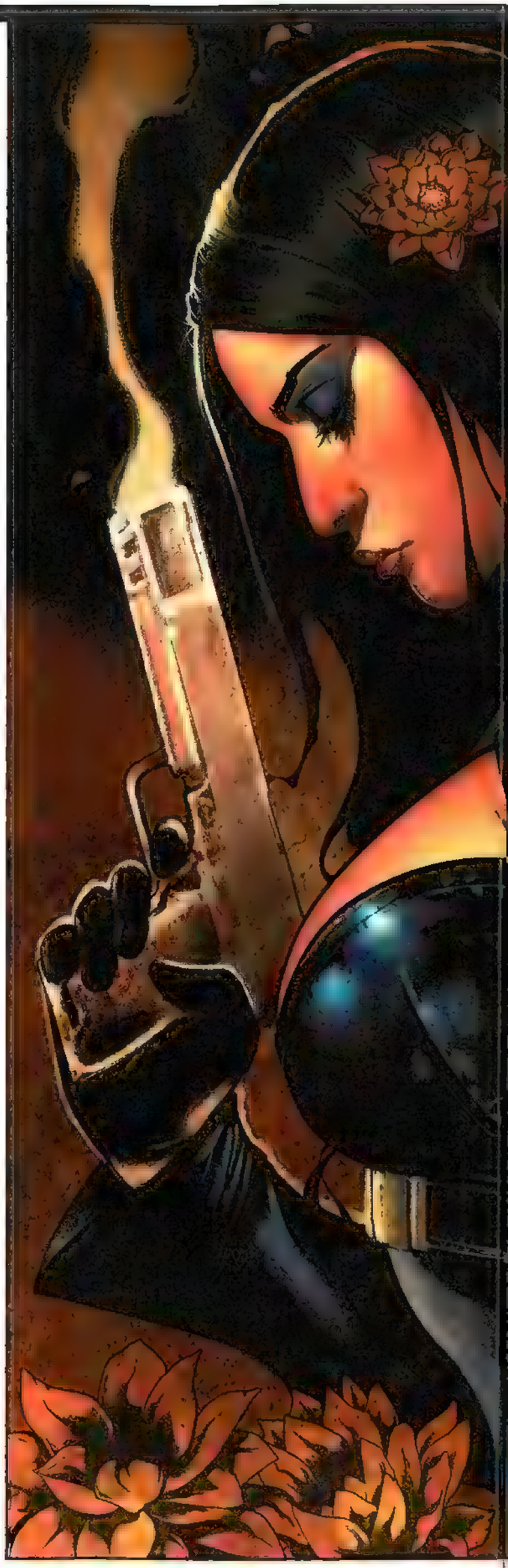
Great-looking comics are never out of fashion, especially when they star bold, fiery women in thrilling situations. And Aspen's *Executive Assistant* franchise has proven to be all of that and more. And for Aspen, it's the bellwether that leads the publisher into its tenth year and beyond.

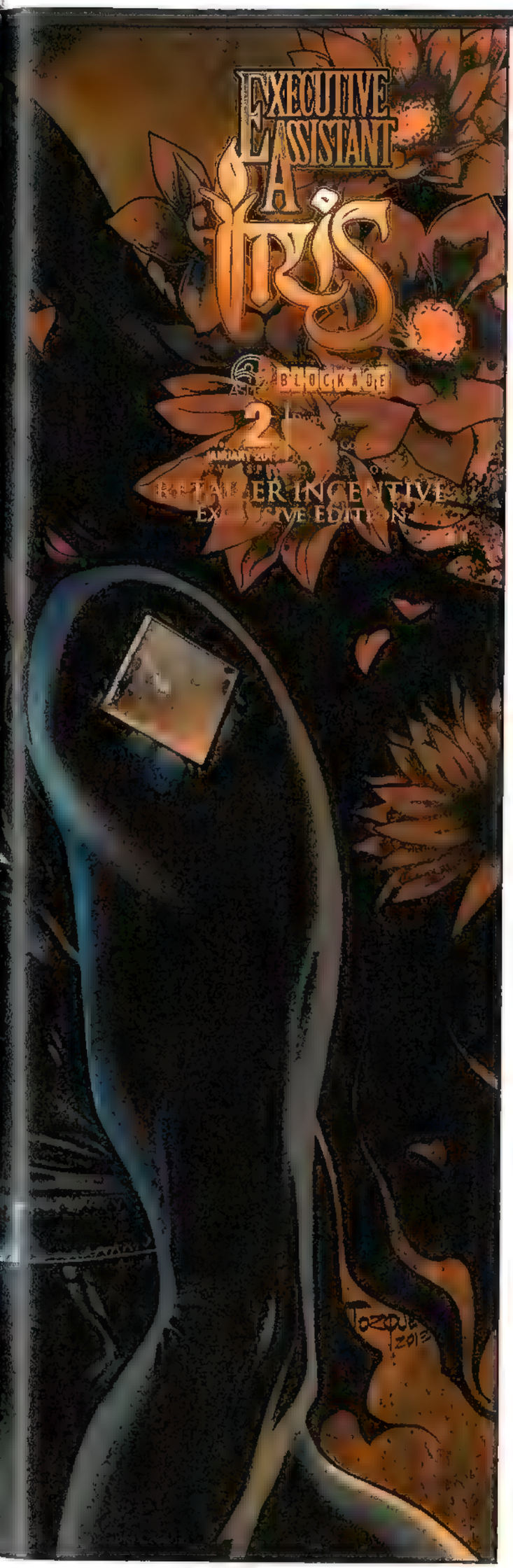
Since its launch in 2003, Aspen MLT has grown to be one of the most thriving companies on the American comics scene. Michael Turner, the cartoonist who founded the company, built its success off of his creator-owned series such as *Aspen* and *Soulfire*. As Aspen went on, it grew with the addition of other titles such as *Charismagic* and *Shrugged*, but none would parallel the runaway success of *Executive Assistant*.

Created by Turner along with David Wohl and Brad Foxhoven, *Executive Assistant* follows a group of elite women who are one-part secretary, one-part bodyguard, and one-part all-around assassin.

"*Executive Assistant* all begins with Iris in *Executive Assistant*: *Iris*, who fought her way from servitude at the hands of a sinister and deadly, corporate employer named Mr. Ching, and eventually ended up getting her revenge on him and freeing herself," explained Aspen Editor-In-Chief, Vince Hernandez.

As it turns out, the concept of *Executive Assistant* is loosely based on a true story that co-creators David Wohl and Brad Foxhoven read about in the New York Times. The article described an actual school in China that takes in young orphan girls and trains them to be servants/bodyguards for high-end corporate clientele. Taking a page from that true story, Wohl and Foxhoven partnered with artist Edu Francisco and it became a surprise hit for the California-based publisher. After the breakneck success of the *Executive Assistant*: *Iris* miniseries in 2009 and 2010, Aspen has





published two follow-up volumes and also branched out with series following other characters, subtitled *Lotus, Orchid* and *Violet.*

"When we come up with a new idea, we hope that fans will like it enough so that we can keep making new stories that continue to develop the world and the characters who populate it," said co-creator David Wohl.

In 2012, Aspen went a step further launching its first ongoing with *Executive Assistant: Assassins*. This series focuses on both new and returning Executive Assistants, further exploring the world of the franchise. The series recently finished the story-arc, "Hit List Agenda," and is now crossing over with *Executive Assistant: Iris* on the story-arc "Executive Extinction."

"Even though each title can stand on its own, and the fans don't NEED to read both, Vince and I coordinated an all-encompassing story that includes many fan-favorite Executive Assistants, as well as some cool new ones," explained Wohl. "For my Iris, she has a new employer, the CIA, and while there are definitely some perks from having the support of the government, she discovers there are many liabilities, as well."

Executive Assistant: Iris returns with an all-new series in September, with *Executive Assistant: Assassins* coming out monthly.

"The Executive Assistant franchise is a classic example of one Aspen's trademarks in the industry: strong-willed females kicking butt, high quality production values on the books, and a steady expansion of the universe through new stories and directions for the characters," says Hernandez, who also writes *Executive Assistant: Assassins*. "I think the appeal is in the various personalities and characters we've introduced in the series.

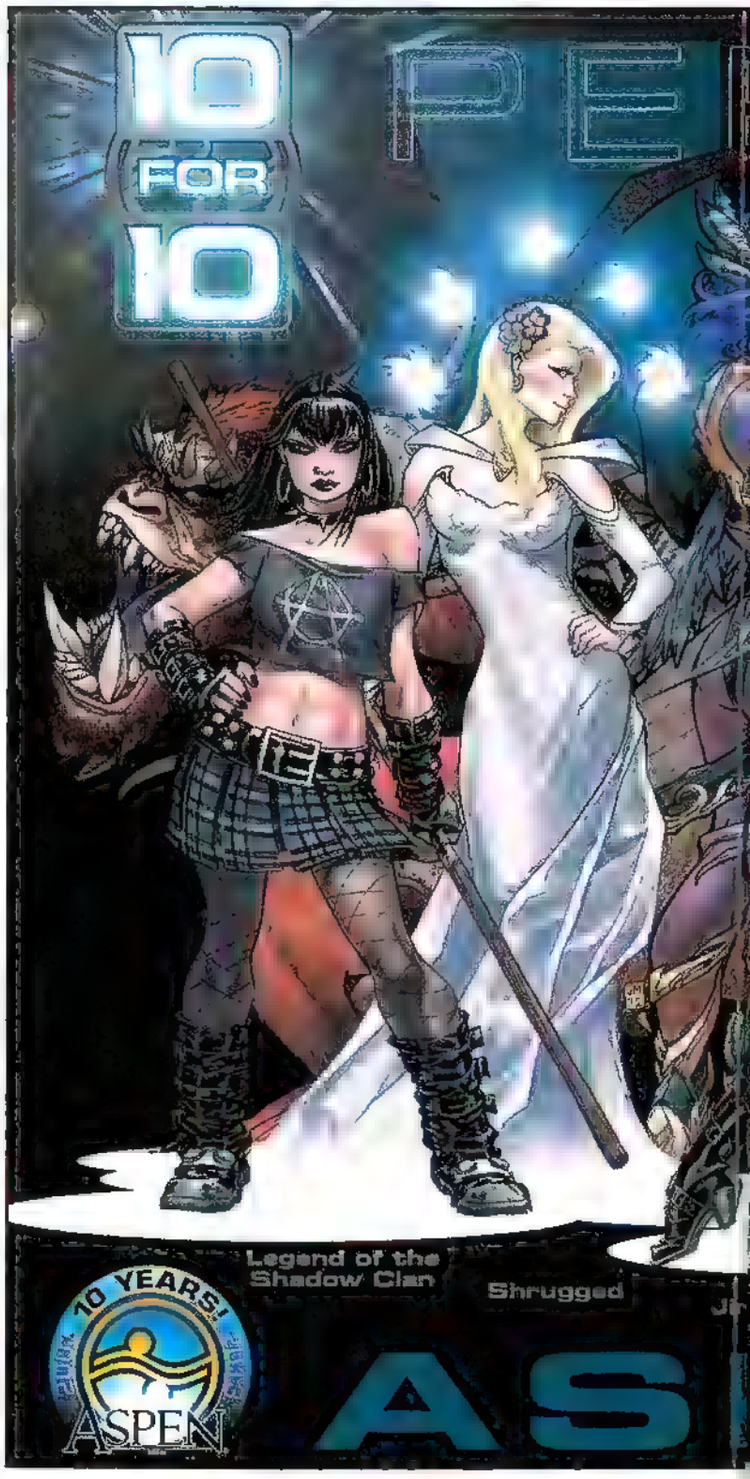
"There's an Executive Assistant for every taste," Hernandez states. "I think people are really surprised once they read it that David Wohl has created this rich tapestry in the story that has carried over since the very first issue."

Aspen's 10 For 10 In 2013

To celebrate its 10th anniversary here in 2013, Aspen is pushing the envelope with a new initiative titled "10 for 10". Over the course of the year, Aspen will launch 10 new series with each first issue to be specially priced at one dollar.

"To publish ten new series in ten months is hard enough for any independent publisher, but to offer them all for only one dollar was even more of a gamble," says Editor-In-Chief Vince Hernandez. "Luckily, we have some tremendously dedicated and talented people on staff that were up to the challenge of pulling it off. With the launch of *Executive Assistant: Assassins* in 2012 beginning to solidify retailer and fan faith in our publishing schedule, we felt it was a perfect time to step it up with the '10 for 10' books."

Here's a look at the "10 For 10" In 2013 as described by Hernandez:



January

Legend of the Shadow Clan by writers David Wohl and Brad Foxhoven, art by Cory Smith and John Starr: "This new property is a modern day take on a ninja family striving to survive not only the day-to-day workings of family life, but also an ancient clan from the past returning to wipe out their entire existence. It's an action-filled adventure with some exciting twists along the way."

March

Shrugged (Vol. 2) by writer Frank Mastromauro, art by Jonathan Marks and Beth Sotelo: "*Shrugged* is a popular Aspen series that debuted several years ago and has been a fan-favorite we're excited to bring back."

April

Jimi: "A fantasy adventure title that harkens back to the wondrous and deadly mythology surrounding genies while exploring an entirely new world in the process."

May

Charismagic (Vol. 2) by writer Vince Hernandez, art by Vincenzo Cucca and Emilio Lopez: "*Charismagic* is a story about Hank Medley, a magician who is called upon to not only save the world, but save an entire realm of magic as well in this new volume."

June

BubbleGun, a new "cyber-punk" action adventure that combines kinetic energy and awesome original cyber designs.

July

Fathom returns with a new miniseries that takes the fan favorite heroine out of her element and against a new menace.

August

Fans Vote for in a competition between two new series, *Awaken Skies* or *Overtaken*. Which series will prove to be the favorite when these two unique premises collide?

September

Executive Assistant: Iris returns with new action and espionage with a cast of new characters.

October

A new series, *Trish Out of Water*, much like its namesake will venture into unfamiliar territory with a novel approach to storytelling.

November

Soulfire returns to cap off a year of incredible new stories. With stunning artwork and a fan favorite character in the lead role, the new series is sure to continue the legacy that began with Michael Turner's vision a decade ago.

GALACTICA VS. FIREFLY:

WHICH WAS THE SHINIEST FRAKKIN' FRANCHISE?

by Rich Handley

It's a classic premise: the crew of a broken-down, decades-old spaceship braving impossible odds, dwindling supplies, relentless pursuers, and threats both from without and within. The desperate renegades, millennia removed from their Earth-born brothers, scurry from system to system, seeking resources vital to their survival and seizing rare opportunities to improve their dire conditions. Fleeing from tyranny, the ragtag travelers strive to stay one step ahead of those determined to take away their serenity.

Sound familiar? It should, assuming you're a fan of either *Firefly* or *Battlestar Galactica*.

Galactica (developed by Glen A. Larson and later reimagined by Ronald D. Moore) and *Firefly* (created by Joss Whedon) each enjoy leagues of devoted followers who continue to vocally decry the nearsighted network executives responsible for tampering with—and ending—their favorite critically acclaimed shows prematurely. Not surprisingly, both series have thus avoided obscurity, remaining relevant to science fiction fans long after their final episodes. It's perhaps fruitless to ponder which series was superior, since neither was in any way inferior. But ponder it we shall, taking into account eight specific criteria.

Longevity

Firefly lasted for only 14 episodes, plus five webisodes (the R. Tam Sessions) and a feature film (*Serenity*). *BSG*, on the other hand, comprised 34 Larson episodes (two seasons, including the much-maligned *Galactica 1980*), 78 Moore episodes (spread over a miniseries and four seasons), two films (*Razor* and *The Plan*), four webisode series (*The Resistance, Razor Flashbacks, The Face of the Enemy* and *Blood and Chrome*) and 19 episodes of *Caprica*. With a total of seven seasons spanning 131 episodes, 37 webisodes and two movies, *Galactica* is the clear winner.

Quantity over quality is not always the optimal barometer. As proof, Jersey Shore lasted for six seasons, whereas *Planet of the Apes, The Middleman, FlashForward, Alien Nation* and *The Tick* each received only a single year on TV. Therefore, other criteria must be considered as well.

Consistency

Larson's *Galactica* was a mixed bag, ranging from clichéd ("The Lost Warrior," with Apollo fighting a Cylon gunslinger in a Western saloon), slapstick ("Greetings From Earth," featuring singing androids Hector and Vector) and embarrassing ("Spaceball," in which super-powered scouts learned how to play baseball) to intriguing ("Murder on the Rising Star," a well-conceived murder mystery), tragic ("The Return of Starbuck,"

G80's lone shining moment) and epic ("The Living Legend," involving Commander Cain and the Pegasus).

Both *Firefly* and Moore's *BSG* featured talented casts portraying fully realized characters, and both maintained high levels of consistency throughout their runs, in terms of acting and writing. But even at its weakest ("Heart of Gold," about the *Serenity* crew protecting a brothel under siege), *Firefly* included no aspects even remotely as ridiculous as either the super-scouts or Hector and Vector. Hence, by default, *Firefly* wins in this category.

Casting

Despite memorable performances by John Collicos, Jonathan Harris, Dirk Benedict, Richard Hatch and Lorne Greene, the original *BSG* was marred by painfully unconvincing acting from Maren Jensen and Noah Hathaway—not to mention the stiff, uninspired portrayals of Troy and Dillon by Kent McCord and Barry Van Dyke, respectively. (The less said about the scout kids and the two actors playing Doctor Zee, the better.)

On *BSG*, Edward James Olmos, Mary McDonnell, Katee Sackhoff, Jamie Bamber, James Callis and Aaron Douglas all turned in brilliant performances. The only weak link, if the show had one, was Nicki Clyne, whose range as Cally was often limited to pouty whining. Ironically, one of the best aspects of the reimagined *Galactica* was Hatch's return as Tom Zarek, delivering a far more compelling performance than he had on the 1970s show.

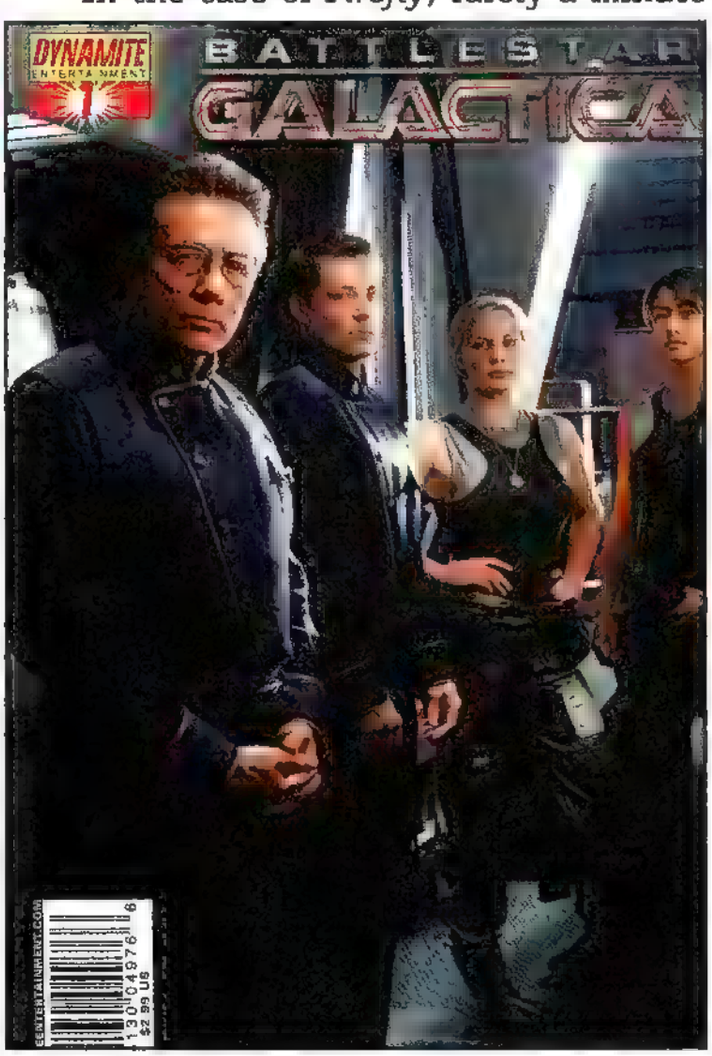
The *BSG* cast never dropped the ball—even when the writing was not up to snuff, as in such rare clunkers as "Black Market" (the infamous "Lee loves a hooker" episode), and the same was true of *Caprica*. Although that stylistically stunning follow-up series was occasionally criticized for its slow pacing and soap-operatic storytelling, few faulted the cast for its premature cancelation, with Esai Morales, Polly Walker, Eric Stoltz and Paula Malcomson receiving particular praise.

Rarely does a TV cast bring its "A game" as consistently as McDonnell, Olmos and their cast-mates did. But among those who could make that claim were the cast of *Firefly*, especially Nathan Fillion, Gina Torres, Alan Tudyk and Adam Baldwin. Thus, choosing a winner for the casting category is no easy task. With the *BSG* cast reliably turning in Emmy-worthy performances, week after week, that series edges out *Firefly*... but only just slightly.

Humor

In terms of comedy, there's a clear winner—and again, it's *Firefly*. Anyone who has watched anything written or directed by Joss Whedon (from *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Angel* to *Dr. Horrible's Sing-Along Blog* and even *The Avengers*) knows that he excels at mixing exciting action, relatable characters and a healthy dose of sharp wit.

In the case of *Firefly*, rarely a minute



passed without spit-take-worthy dialog, such as Wash's dinosaur action-figure battle, Jayne's "I'll be in my bunk" mutter, and this hilarious exchange:

Jayne: Are you saying she's a witch?

Wash: Yes Jayne, she's a witch. She has had congress with the Beast.

Jayne: She's in Congress?

Dramatic Storytelling

Just as *Firefly* is the clear winner for comedy, Moore's *Galactica* laps the competition for dramatic storytelling. *BSG*'s interwoven story arcs, established during the miniseries, were expertly developed until the series' finale. Who, among the cast, were secretly Cylons? Who or what was Baltar's invisible Six? What did the opera house symbolize? What was the Cylons' plan? And who were the Final Five? Fans may debate whether these questions were satisfactorily resolved, or whether the finale failed to thrill, but few sci-fi series have held an audience's rapt attention like *BSG* did for four years.

Firefly was largely episodic and light in tone, with each script neatly and humorously wrapped up by episode's end. With the exception of the fandom-polarizing character deaths in *Serenity*, *Firefly* did not leave audiences emotionally drained on a weekly basis. The same was true of Larson's *Galactica*, in which traumatic events—the deaths of Serena and Cain, for instance—were quickly forgotten, rarely referenced by the happy, well-adjusted characters.

Moore's *Galactica*, on the other hand, thrived on tragedy, repeatedly reducing viewers to exhausted, tear-streaked balls of muscle tension. Between Tyrol's depression, Lee's suicidal tendencies, Roslin's cancer, Felix's amputation, Starbuck's death and rebirth, and Anders' brain injury, watching *BSG* during its final season often required a box of tissues, a bottle of ambrosia and an asthma inhaler.

It's no wonder Adama was so often drunk, vomiting, foaming spittle, and crying uncontrollably that year, as he faced one emotional wallop after another. Story-wise, *BSG* delivered one hell of a frakkin' sucker-punch, and Adama (and the audience) took that punch right in the gut.

Licensed Spinoffs: Quantity

For those unsatisfied with waiting week to week, a wide assortment of comics and books have kept both series' fans occupied over the years. But how have these ancillary tales fared compared to their respective TV series—and which franchise has offered a better expanded universe?

On the quantity side, *BSG* is the hands-down winner. In addition to a role-playing game from Margaret Weis Productions, three lines of novels have been released: 14 from Ace/Berkley, set during the original TV series; seven from Pocket Books, taking place several yahrens later, and co-written

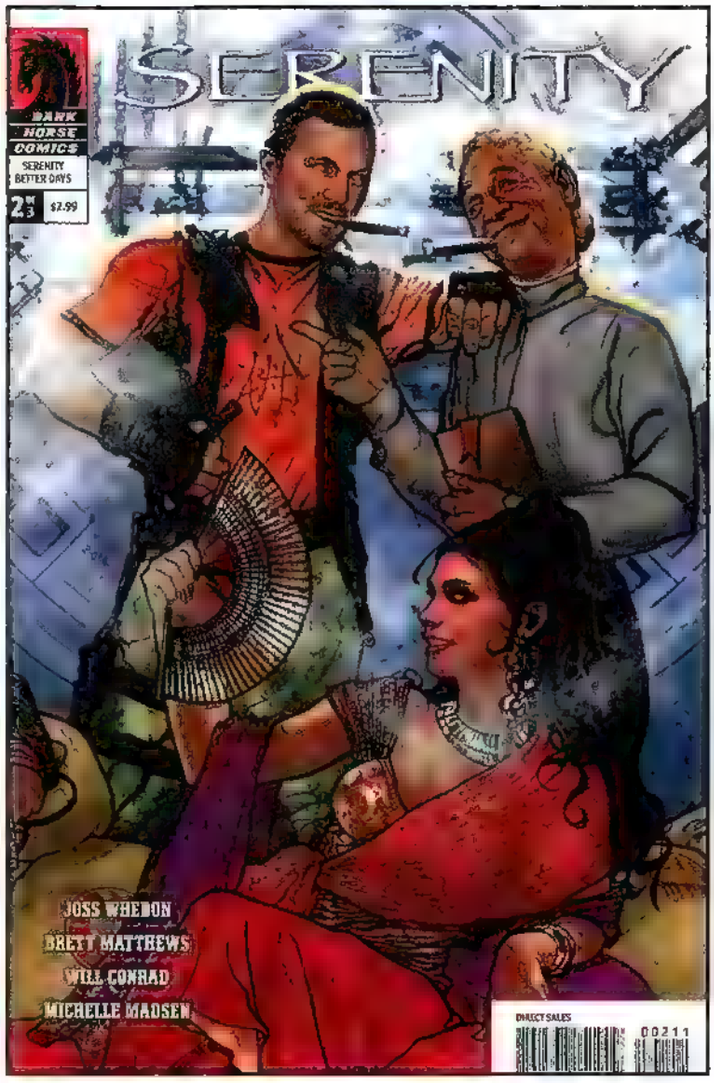
by Hatch himself; and four from Tor Books, based on the reimagined universe.

The Ace books were mostly adaptations of Larson's two shows, though the final four featured original tales. Hatch's continuation novels were entertaining, though sloppy editing, continuity problems and a distracting abundance of typos turned some fans away. As for the Moore-era novels, despite some inconsistencies with the Cylons' and Zarek's onscreen-established backgrounds, all three provided solid reads, particularly Peter David's *Sagittarius Is Bleeding*.

More numerous have been the *BSG* comics, beginning with Marvel's 23 issues, published from 1978 to 1980. Set after "Lost Planet of the Gods," Marvel's run coincided with a 52-issue *BSG* comic strip in Britain's *Look-In* magazine. These were followed by a French-language strip in *Télé-Junior;* a pair of hardcover Grandreams annuals containing comic strips and short fiction; several miniseries and one-shots published during the 1990s, first by Maximum Press (including a Hatch-penned storyline contradicting his novels) and later by Realm Press; a Tokyopop manga digest set during the Cylon occupation of New Caprica; and a range of comics from Dynamite Entertainment produced during the past decade, based on both generations of *Galactica*.

While Marvel, Look-In, Télé-Junior and Grandreams utilized a light-hearted approach (particularly the latter, aimed as it was at a juvenile audience), Maximum took a more mature look at the mythos, killing off major characters and incorporating the Biblical Adam and Eve into Colonial history. Realm, meanwhile, explored the Cylons' reptilian origins and their connection to Count Iblis, and featured breathtaking painted artwork, making it that much more frustrating when Realm's multiple titles were abruptly canceled without resolution.

Dynamite currently retains the *BSG* license, though its efforts to date have



been a bit uneven. A monthly title based on Moore's show offered a trio of well-crafted storylines, while other comics featured compelling backstories for Zarek, Baltar, Adama, Starbuck, Helo and the Pegasus crew; a serialized tale set before the TV show; and detailed histories of the Final Five, the Cylon War and a new set of characters known as Ghost Squadron. These stories sometimes contradicted the TV series' continuity, however, particularly with regard to the above-noted backstories.

Less successful have been Dynamite's forays into classic Battlestar. The publisher has produced two lackluster miniseries based on the original show, along with a third reimagining *Galactica 1980;* a sequel to the latter, titled *Galactica 1981*, was promoted but never materialized. Recently, the firm announced an ongoing series based on classic Galactica, to be published in 2013, from writers Dan Abnett and Andy Lanning. Little is yet known about this title.

Licensed Spinoffs: Quality

Compared to *Galactica*, *Firefly* has seen far fewer spinoff tales. Other than a single novelization, the only published prose has been a quartet of short stories in the book *Firefly: Still Flying*. (An unpublished novel, *My Own Kind of Freedom*, can be found online.) Like *BSG*, *Firefly* has also had an RPG system and several non-fiction books, as well as official blueprints and maps.

What *Firefly*'s expanded universe lacks in volume, however, it makes up in quality. In particular, Dark Horse published seven comic books based on that mythos: two miniseries (*Those Left Behind* and *Better Days*), a graphic novel (*The Shepherd's Tale*) and four one-shots. There was not a bad story in the bunch, nor did they contradict their televised parent, as Dynamite's *BSG* efforts sometimes did. These tales were all worthy extensions of the TV series, setting up the events of *Serenity* by explaining why Inara and Book left following the final episode.

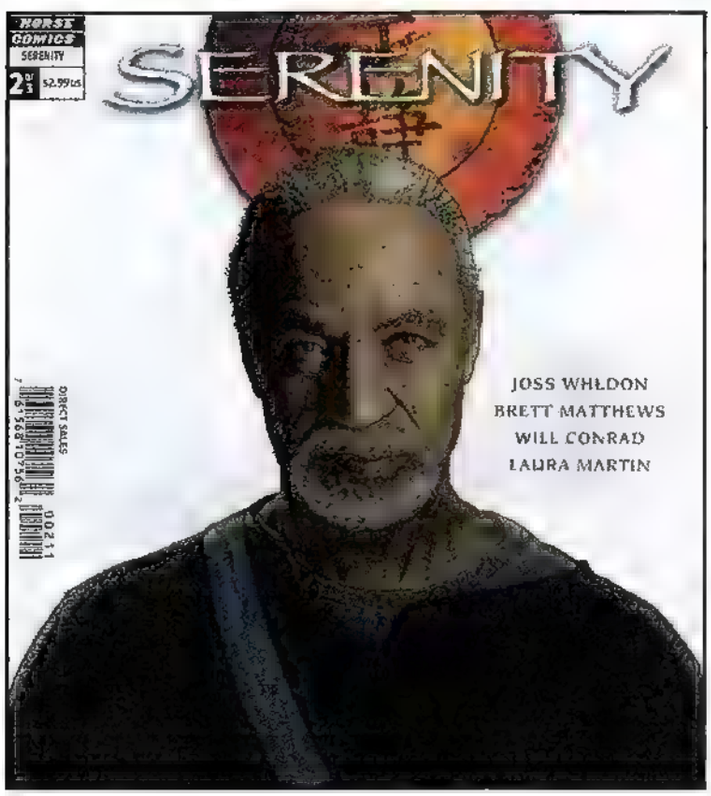
Most notable among these comics was *The Shepherd's Tale*. Frequently, *Firefly* teased viewers regarding Book's past, revealing him to be more than just a peaceful preacher. Unfortunately, neither the show nor the movie revealed his mysterious past. This graphic novel, told in reverse chronological order from Book's death in *Serenity* until his violent youth, provided powerful and much-needed answers, tipping the spinoff scales in *Firefly*'s favor in regard to quality.

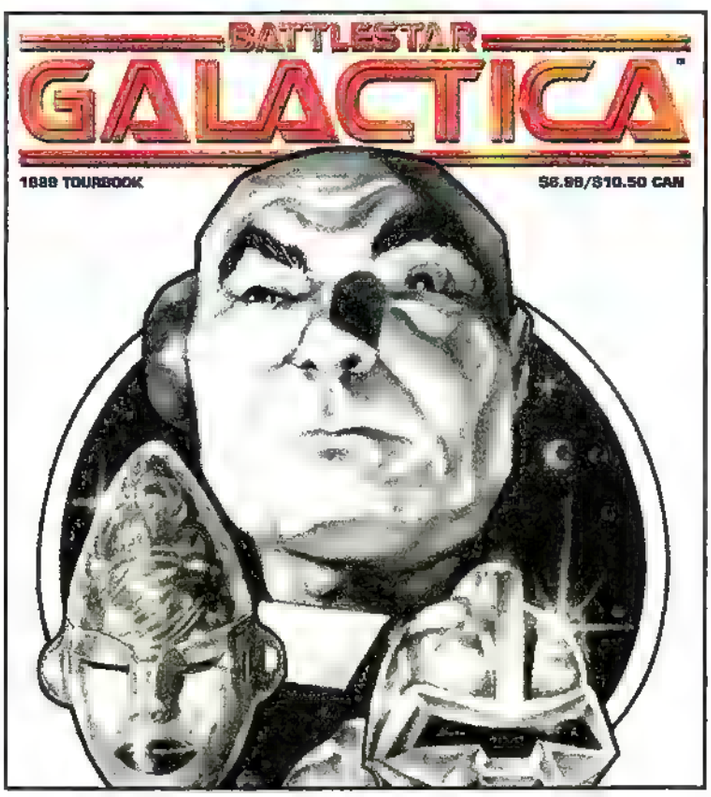
The Frakkin' Shiniest: Browncoats or Colonials?

Battlestar Galactica takes first place for longevity, casting, dramatic storytelling and licensed spinoff quantity, while *Firefly* jumps ahead in terms of consistency, humor and spinoff quality, for a final tally of four to three. The Colonials win the battle (partly thanks to an advantage in sheer volume), but the Browncoats put up a proud and valiant fight, doing right by their fandom.

Comparing *Firefly* and *Battlestar Galactica* may seem like comparing sex and chocolate: A person might be more in the mood for one on any given day, but that's certainly no reason to stop enjoying the other, as well. Ultimately, there's more than enough room in the Verse for two eminently shiny series. Both have done the impossible, and that makes them mighty.

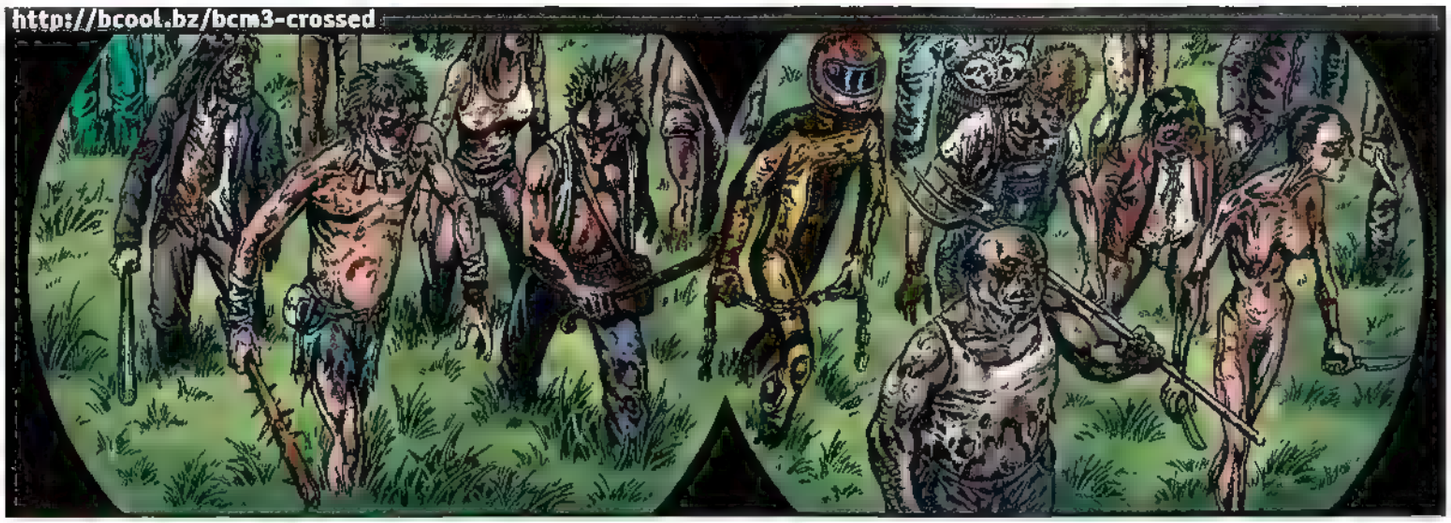
So say we all.





GET CROSSED: C-DAY 2013
SPREADS THE PLAGUE TO COMIC SHOPS
An Interview with Crossed creator, Garth Ennis

http://bcool.bz/bcm3-crossed



GET CROSSED: C-DAY 2013

by James Kuhoric

In 2008, Garth Ennis changed the face of horror comics with the debut of *Crossed*. Having redefined the face of mature readers comics with his *Punisher* work at Marvel and *Preacher* series at Vertigo, fans were expecting something groundbreaking. And what they got was nothing short of a work that would prove to be his most extreme to date. Ennis painted a world in red that was inhabited by the worst possible human monsters taken to a degree hereto un-witnessed in the medium. In this apocalyptic scenario, a contagion has turned civilization into a degraded cesspool of violence, sadism, and uncontrolled impulses. Stripped away is the illusion of safety and civility. In its place are infected that have lost all control over the basest most vile urges of the human condition. And what is left are roaming mobs of infected that take great joy in murder, mutilation, rape, and sodomy. Simply put – if you haven't read *Crossed*, you have not seen the human face of hell.

The true innovation of this world was in the ability to set up the premise and give some of today's most talented writers an opportunity to romp in the twisted playground. In 2011, Avatar Press launched *Crossed: Badlands*, an ongoing bi-weekly anthology that gave these creative scribes a chance to leave conventional comics behind and step into the darkness that Ennis released into the world. The result has been a year straight of the most brutal and grueling horror comics ever seen and it culminates this March with Ennis' return to the series in *Crossed: Badlands #25*.

Fans and retailers across the globe are preparing for the issue to debut on March

13, the annual C-Day for 2013. In this celebration of Ennis' opus, participating comic shops will have parties that include cosplay events, contests, exclusive Crossed merchandise, and will introduce fans new and old to a vision of horror that has changed the way we look at survival fiction. Bleeding Cool Magazine had an opportunity to sit down with Garth Ennis to discuss *Crossed*, C-Day, and the exciting upcoming debut of his live action *Crossed* webisodes.

YOU ARE RETURNING TO THE SERIES YOU CREATED, *CROSSED*. WHILE YOU HAVE OTHER PROJECTS YOU ARE WORKING ON, WHAT IS IT ABOUT *CROSSED* THAT KEEPS BRINGING YOU BACK?

Like any worldwide horror setting, the possibilities are endless. You can do stories about anything, anywhere. Ideas suggest themselves all the time. And I do feel a sense of responsibility to come back from time to time, help keep things ticking over.

WHAT CAN FANS EXPECT WITH "THE FATAL ENGLISHMAN," YOUR NEW STORY ARC WHICH DEBUTS IN *CROSSED: BADLANDS #25*?

This is the first Crossed story in which someone decides to have a go back at the Crossed, to attempt the kind of "fight back" that has long been deemed impossible. Being a military man, however, the character in question has some quite drastic solutions in mind (he also has some original ideas about where the Crossed originated, or perhaps what they most truly represent). But he comes face to face with some other survivors, a peculiar little bunch whose presence may complicate things somewhat.

The four leads make up a small British government unit – or perhaps ex-government unit – who've been traveling the country in the 4-5 years since the initial Crossed outbreak, seeing what's what. Or, as their leader puts it in part one, "An Englishman, an Irishman, a Scotsman and a Welshman walk into a post-apocalyptic wasteland..."

AVATAR PRESS HAS DESCRIBED YOUR FOLLOWING STORY ARC *CROSSED: BADLANDS #50* AS A "PATIENT ZERO" STYLE STORY. WILL "THE FATAL ENGLISHMEN" SET UP YOUR NEXT ARC?

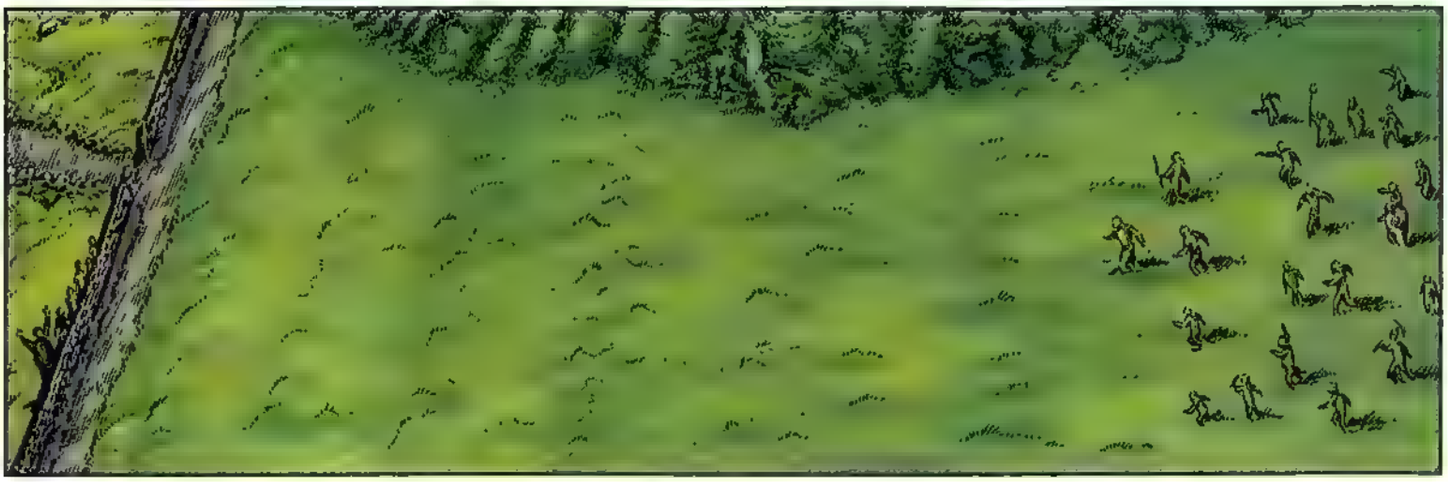
It's more of a tale from the outbreak than a Patient Zero story- except in the sense that, as in *World War Z* where I believe the term originated, the "patient zero" isn't actually patient zero, it becomes immediately apparent that other examples have been encountered.

The characters from "The Fatal Englishman" will indeed play a role in this one. Readers may find their original occupation rather surprising.

WHILE YOU CREATED THE CROSSED UNIVERSE WITH THE ORIGINAL TEN-ISSUE SERIES IN 2008, AND ANOTHER STORY TO KICK-OFF THE NEW ON-GOING BI-WEEKLY SERIES *CROSSED: BADLANDS*, THERE HAVE BEEN SEVERAL OTHER WRITERS TO EXPAND UPON YOUR UNIVERSE; DAVID LAPHAM, SI SPURRIER, JAMIE DELANO, DAVID HINE... HOW HAS IT FELT TO SEE THIS WORLD LIVE ON WITH OTHER WRITERS?

I think everyone's done pretty much what you'd expect them to do, whilst at the same time providing plenty of surprises in their individual stories. David Lapham splashed gore to the rafters, Jamie naturally made the people worse than the Crossed, Dave Hine gave us a nasty little story of frustration and obsession (check out his graphic novel *Strange Embrace*, if you're a fan of intelligent twisted shit).

Si's work on the webcomic has probably come closest to what I intended for



Crossed - there's a conversation in one scene regarding the disadvantages of volunteering that I was very impressed by, thought it was exactly the sort of insight the story should bring out. Good writer, that Spurrier. He may have to go.

Really, having other writers frees me up to explore aspects of the Crossed world that might otherwise be lost in all the carnage; with plenty of ketchup flying around elsewhere I feel like the pressure's off. The "Fatal Englishman," as you'll see, focuses more on the tragic side of the devastation than the horrific- although there's still a degree of Crossed hijinks to remind us where we are.

IT APPEARS 2013 WILL BE CROSSED'S BIGGEST YET. AT NYCC, YOU ANNOUNCED YOU WILL BE CREATING LIVE-ACTION *CROSSED* WEBISODES THIS YEAR, WITH YOU WRITING AND DIRECTING. WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR THESE LIVE STORIES?

We're talking about half a dozen short stories with a common thread running through them- fast, punchy little vignettes that will hopefully linger unpleasantly in the mind. More on this around C-Day, I believe.

WITH ALL THE HORROR YOU HAVE WRITTEN OVER THE YEARS, WHAT SCARES GARTH ENNIS?

What doesn't? Not very good with heights, or widths either, come to that. Enclosed spaces. The dark. The light. Drowning. Spiders, snakes, octopi, squid- generally I think things should have legs, but no more than four. Although if I'm honest, what first came to mind was the thought of being caught on a long-haul flight without a book to read. That really would be an absolute cunt.

Funny thing is, I never really intended to be a horror writer. I'm not the world's biggest fan of the genre- I like a book here, intermittently follow a writer there. I like one zombie movie, one vampire movie, a couple of werewolf flicks, but I'm not really what you'd call dedicated. Yet here I am.

WHAT I WANT FROM GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY

by Brendon Connelly

As Marvel and James Gunn head towards production of their *Guardians of the Galaxy* movie, it's worth checking the calendar and reminding yourself that the film won't be out until August 2014. It's early days yet, but that doesn't mean we can't speculate and obsess.

If it seems like we've been talking about this movie for years, it's because we have. Kevin Feige first confirmed the film was in development in 2011. Okay, you're reading this in a magazine so maybe that doesn't seem so long gone, but if I published these very same words online, the magical time-distortion properties of the internet would make it seem like a lifetime ago.

So we've had plenty of time to chew on the prospect. Months of wondering and daydreaming. And now I, for one, am already quite invested in the film.

I definitely already know what I want from *Guardians of the Galaxy*.

I want director-writer James Gunn to take it seriously... but not too seriously.

Sure, there's a talking Raccoon and he's really handy with a gun. That shouldn't be played for goofiness but it is absurd, and that absurdity needs to be addressed. And Rocket Raccoon has a sense of humour, and should be allowed to keep that - without becoming the funny animal sidekick.

Then there's Groot, a plant creature and monarch of his home world. That's a bit of a trickier sell than a playboy in a tin suit, but land the tone right, and we're on. Hopefully.

Perhaps trickier is Drax the Destroyer because he's called "The Destroyer." That's loaded with Ming the Merciless-style puffed-up preposterousness. It's the naming equivalent of a Luchador mask, mixing the threatening with the camp. Still, pricking that appellation and letting the air out shouldn't be any harder that dealing with Thor and Loki and all their overblown hair-band razzamatazz.

The first trick with *Guardians of the Galaxy* will be getting the odd mix of tones right. Then, for the second trick, maybe we can have some brilliant characterisation, please, and crackling personal interplay.

And all of this can drive the exciting, surprising plot. That sounds great.

So, yeah, I know exactly what I want from *Guardians of the Galaxy*. I want everything I got from *The Avengers*.

Guardians Roll Call

With excitement building for next year's *Guardians of the Galaxy* movie, *Bleeding Cool Magazine* looks at the Guardian's membership and first appearances to highlight which characters may be featured in the upcoming film. Let the speculation begin...

Charlie-27: first appearance *Marvel Super-Heroes #18* (1969) – Created by

Arnold Drake and Gene Colan, Charlie-27 was one of the four original core Guardians to premiere in *Marvel Super-Heroes #18*. Born on Jupiter and genetically engineered to live in its harsh environment, Charlie-27 is as strong as a dozen normal Earth-men. Following the Badoon invasion which wiped out his race, Charlie would connect with other survivors of the galactic genocide and form the freedom force that would fight back against the monsters wreaking havoc with sentient beings everywhere.

Drax the Destroyer: first appearance *Iron Man #55* (1973) – Arthur Douglas was killed by Thanos and his spirit was placed into an alien body to fight against his murderer. In his new form, Drax enjoyed a host of abilities including super strength, energy beams, and flight. The character fought Marvel stalwarts through the 70s and 80s before being killed and subsequently resurrected in the pages of *Silver Surfer*. Drax was an important contributor throughout several *Annihilation* series and joined the Guardians with the 2008 relaunch.

MARVEL COMICS GROUP.
THE INVINCIBLE
IRON MAN
MONSTERS! I'VE TRACKED YOU ACROSS GALAXIES FOR THIS MOMENT!
EVEN IF YOU CRUSH IRON MAN- YOU CAN'T STOP THE DESTROYER!
THE GOLDEN AVENGER BATTLES THE TITANS OF SATURN, AND LEARNS TO
BEWARE THE BLOOD BROTHERS!

Martinex: first appearance *Marvel Super-Heroes #18* (1969) – Martinex was born on the Earth colonized dwarf planet of Pluto in the 31st century. Like all Pluvians, his body was covered by crystalline facets that allowed them to survive in the extremely frigid environment of the world. The Pluvians' unique physiology allowed them to generate heat and cold from their hands, powers which Martinex would use to fight the Badoon, who also destroyed his race during their invasion of the solar system. He would go on to join with fellow survivors of the Badoon invasion to form the Guardians of the Galaxy.

Vance Astro / Major Victory: first appearance *Marvel Super-Heroes #18* (1969) – Vance Astro was a 20th century astronaut on a mission to colonize Alpha Centauri. But his ship was lost in time for centuries and he found himself awakened to witness the Badoon invasion of Centauri IV. Vance was captured and enslaved, along with the rest of the Earth population, but was able to escape and bring together the original freedom fighters that formed the Guardians of the Galaxy. He would eventually find Captain America's shield in the future and would use his psychic abilities to propel it and control its flight in battle.

Yondu: first appearance *Marvel Super-Heroes #18* (1969) – Originally a hunter from a primitive humanoid tribe living on Centauri IV, Yondu's people attempted to avoid contact with the humans colonizing his planet. Using empathetic powers, Yondu is able to make a connection with nature and sense disturbances around him. When Vance Astro arrives and begins carrying out his time-lost mission, the two thrown together by the circumstances of the Badoon invasion. The pair attempts to flee the destruction around them but is quickly captured. Escaping imprisonment on the recently conquered Earth, they join with two other fugitives, Charlie-27 and Martinex, to form the freedom fighting Guardians of the Galaxy.

Starhawk: first appearance *Defenders #27* (1975) – Stakar Ogord was born to parents Quasar and Kismet in the 20th century. When Stakar and his sister Aleta

found the Hawk God in its inert statue form, they were merged into one being, Starhawk, and given the cosmic power to generate and cast beams of light energy in battle. The two beings in one body were able to combine the necessary wisdom and power in controlling the Hawk God's expansive energies. Aleta became a disembodied consciousness giving Stakar their primary physical form. Starhawk was virtually immortal, living for hundreds of years and access a precognition that contributed to him dubbing himself as the "One-Who-Knows." The melded pair eventually made the ultimate sacrifice to save the Guardians and the time stream from a weapon that had the potential to collapse space and time.

Gamora: first appearance *Strange Tales #180* (1975) – Created by Jim Starlin, Gamora is the green skinned adopted daughter of Thanos and last member of the Zen Whoberi race. Thanos trained the orphan and twisted her perceptions so she would assist him in the destruction of Magus. She is a deadly weapon master and was enhanced with cybernetics turning her into not only a vicious assassin but a super powered weapon focused on destroying the targets laid out for her by Thanos. Following the cosmic events of *Annihilation*, Gamora joined the Guardians of the Galaxy in the 2008 series relaunch.

Rocket Raccoon: first appearance *Marvel Preview #7* (1976) – Rocket Raccoon is perhaps best known for the 1985 mini-series by Mike Mignola (Hellboy) and Al Milgrom. Created by Bill Mantlo and Keith Giffen, Rocket Raccoon was born in an insane otherworldly colony where beings genetically manipulated animals to gain human intelligence and bipedal bodies. Rocket becomes a swashbuckling starship captain who ambidextrously wields two laser pistols. Teaming up with Groot, Rocket Raccoon would become a member of the Guardians of the Galaxy following his adventures in the *Annihilators* series.

Groot: first appearance *Tales to Astonish #13* (1960) – Groot was one of the early sixties characters created by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby. Appearing as a bi-pedal sentient tree creature, he was originally an alien menace sent to capture wayward humans for extraterrestrial experiments. But Groot would later be reimagined as an intergalactic hero and joined the Guardians of the Galaxy team following the events of *Annihilation: Conquest*.

Star-Lord: first appearance *Marvel Preview #4* (1976) – Created by Steve Englehart and Stan Gan, Star-Lord is a weapons master that shares a psychic link with a sentient space craft. He was the son of a human mother and an alien father who through his birthright becomes an interplanetary peace keeper. After a nearly fatal encounter with The Fallen One, he is fitted with a special battle suit and Kree weapons that utilize several different kinds of ammunitions. Star-Lord is one of the central characters of the relaunched Guardians of the Galaxy team.

VINTAGE PAPER CHASE

by Mark Seifert & William Christensen

January is typically a little quiet on the vintage comics scene. There's still activity and a steady stream of sales, of course, but the highest profile auctions of the year usually end in late November to leave plenty of buffer for Christmas, and then everyone has a bit of a post-holiday spending hangover in the early weeks of the New Year.

But as we get into February, collector's thoughts again turn eagerly towards their vintage comics collections. The major auctions kick off again, the more winter cold we put behind us the more the convention buying season ramps up, and we all start to wonder what the year will bring for our collections.

Golden Age

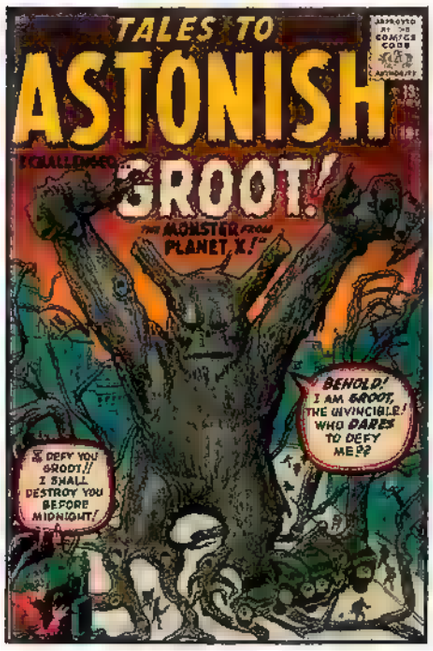
2013 promises to be a fascinating year for vintage comics collecting for a number of reasons, not the least of which is the media hoopla that is about to develop around the 75th anniversary of Superman. Most people reading this know that Superman first appeared in *Action Comics #1* in 1938, and that 75 years later in 2013, that issue and the other earliest Action Comics are among the most sought-after comics of the Golden Age, and also among the most expensive.

So let's talk about what you might look for if you are a more budget-minded Golden Age collector. There are numerous key issues and classic covers (*Superman #14* and #24, and *Action Comics #40* and #52 are just a handful that come to mind) that can be had in the three to four-figure range, depending on grade. *Superman*

#53 is one of the stand-outs in this segment because it has an expanded retelling of his origin, a great cover, and commemorated the 10th anniversary of Superman in 1948. Unslabbed VG-range lower grades go in the $300-400 range, while on the high end a CGC 9.0 sold for $5300 last year.

Silver Age

Classic Lee/Kirby creation Groot has become a cult favorite character in recent years as part of *Guardians of the Galaxy*, and movie hype combined with the early-Silver-Age toughness of his first appearance in *Tales to Astonish #13* have made this one of the hottest Silver Age comics around over the past few months. Unslabbed G/VG range copies have gone in the $140 range recently, with a CGC 7.5 going for $550 and a CGC 9.2 going for $2870 in the past few weeks.


TALES TO ASTONISH
GROOT!
THE MONSTER FROM PLANET X!
BEHOLD! I AM GROOT, THE INVINCIBLE! WHO DARES TO DEFY ME??
DEFY YOU GROOT!! I SHALL DESTROY YOU BEFORE MIDNIGHT!

This is going to be an interesting book to watch in the coming years. Pre-Hero Marvel monster books have always been a popular niche, but this character is moving from the margins and becoming a part of a major Marvel Universe movie franchise. It was released a full year before *Fantastic Four #1*, so it is also far tougher to get than most Silver Age Marvels. Add it all up and this book has a ways to go to reach its potential.

Bronze Age

Rumors surfaced in December that Darkseid would be the major villain of the planned Justice League movie, and that has resulted in an explosion of interest in early Darkseid appearances.

A large amount of that interest has centered around *Jimmy Olsen #134*. Though it contains just a one-panel cameo of Darkseid (#135 also has a cameo, while the later *Forever People #1* contains a more extensive appearance), the current marketplace has spoken on this issue, and it appears that collectors are focusing on *Jimmy Olsen #134* as the character's first appearance.

A KING-SIZE KIRBY BLOCKBUSTER
SUPERMAN'S EX-PAL
THE NEW JIMMY OLSEN
DC JIMMY OLSEN
15¢
SUPERMAN'S OUT OF THE WAY, JIMMY!
GOOD! NOW OUR ROAD IS CLEAR AND FAST!
PREPARE FOR EVENTS NEW TO ALL YOUR PAST EXPERIENCES IN "THE MOUNTAIN OF JUDGMENT"

Collectors are also finding that it is surprisingly tough for a 1970 DC Bronze Age comic. Unslabbed high grades are up in the $350-$400 range as of this writing, and a slabbed CGC 9.6 that went for $700 in November is already looking like a bargain

The Future Of Vintage Paper

There's much, much more to cover in the vintage market, so we'll be expanding coverage and starting an online companion to this column soon, and if you'd like to contribute info contact us at vintage-paper@bleedingcool.com.

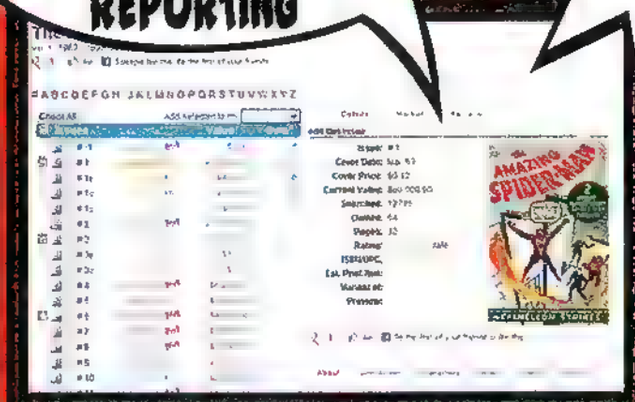
THE WORLD OF COMICS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

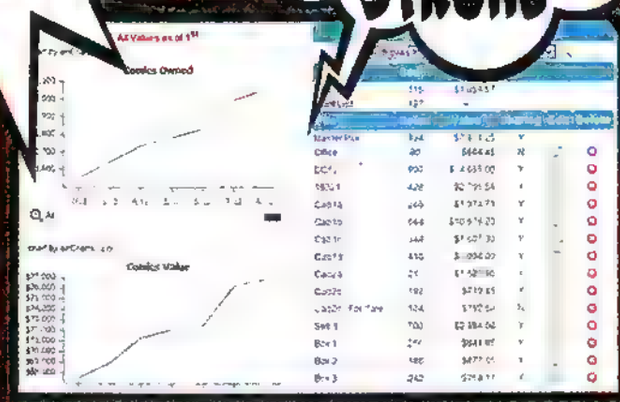
DON'T PAY TO TRACK YOUR COLLECTION

100% FREE PRICE GUIDE INCLUDING HISTORICAL REPORTING

COMIC BOOK COMMUNITY

25,000 MEMBERS STRONG





TRACK YOUR COLLECTION FOR FREE

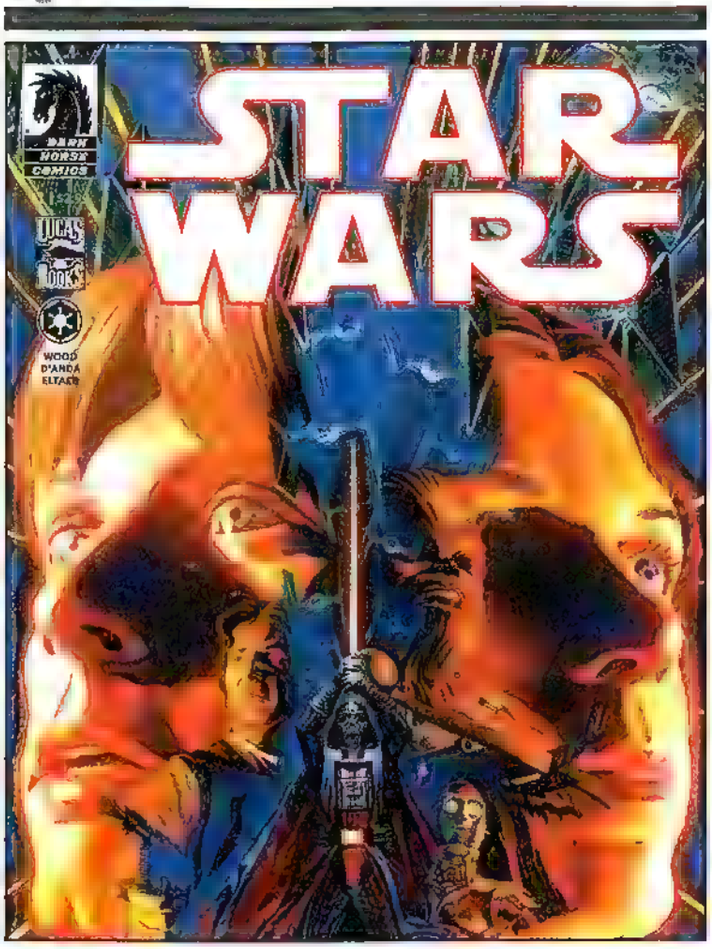
COMIC BOOK REALM.com

THE WORLD OF COMICS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

FIND MORE comicbookrealm.com

SPECULATOR CORNER: HOT COMICS = CASH!

by Rich Johnston



Appropriately for this sci-fi issue, it's worth noting and celebrating how much of a hit the new *Star Wars* comic has been from Dark Horse. Online, the first issue has sold for over $50 for first, standard and unslabbed printings. We haven't seen a rapid rise like that in the price of a comic since the mini-Image boom last year.

Amazing Spider-Man is no more. Long live *Superior Spider-Man!* But his coming was foretold... Issue 698, which features the switch between Peter Parker and Otto Octavius, is currently getting $10 bids on eBay, as has the subsequent #699. Issue #700, even though it was over twice the price of the other two, hasn't been getting much of a markup (around $12 max), but the variants have been doing very well, with the 1:150 Steve Ditko cover repeatedly getting over $1000. Even #699.1, which is more of a prequel to the new *Morbius* series, has been getting bids for around $5.

But *Superior Spider-Man #1* has been getting its own action, selling for around $5 on eBay. And *Daredevil #21*, featuring the first appearance of Superior Spider-Man in action, is an easy sell at $10.

One comic that might be of note, that saw Otto Octavius begin to take over Peter Parker's mind – and may well be the way he returns – was in *Amazing Spider-Man #600*, which sells from anywhere from $1 to $5 on a good day. As *Superior Spider-Man* continues longer than many have assumed it will, this may be a comic that will gain more importance.

Spider-Man is one of a number of the newly relaunched Marvel NOW! titles, but Marvel shipped them in such high numbers, its unlikely any will make much of a speculator splash, the regular versions at least. Any heat for those books has been sucked into the plenitude of variant covers used to promote them.

Speaking of variant covers, there have been a few things to keep an eye on in this regard. First, after the *Justice League of America* state flags, DC has declared they are pulling back their incentive variant programme. Expect to see less tiered variant covers every month.

Secondly, the Ghost and Phantom Variant covers, in which a bunch of retailers gather together and pool their resources to commission exclusive covers for certain comics with strong appeal, such as *Walking Dead* and *My Little Pony*, has proved rather successful. More retailers and conventions are doing deals for exclusive covers, and the disparity between geographical locations may be about to rise as a result.

But thirdly, the decision of the semi-national chain store Hastings to put comics in every store and commission their own variant covers has seen a disparity in price between those who live near a Hastings and those who don't, with people able to walk in, pick up a comic, and then instantly sell it on eBay for $40. That's not happening quite so much as Hastings have started selling the comics online, and not copies that may have been doing brisk business.

As for upcoming comics... well, the Image Issue One phenomenon is still in play. The odds are *Pretty Deadly* will be under-ordered in that regard.

With interest in "the first Green Lantern" Volthoom (which sounds like a comic book sound effect) in *Green Lantern Annual #1* and issue #15, it may be worth tracking down his first appearance, if you can call it that: in the *Earth 2* graphic novella by Grant Morrison and Frank Quitely, as the Tibetan monk who had given the Crime Syndicate's Power Ring his powers, and who now provides the voice and personality for the ring. A hardcover graphic novel, it will have had a lower first print than the creative team and has been through a number of prints since the original hardcover in 2000. It can still be picked up for cover price...

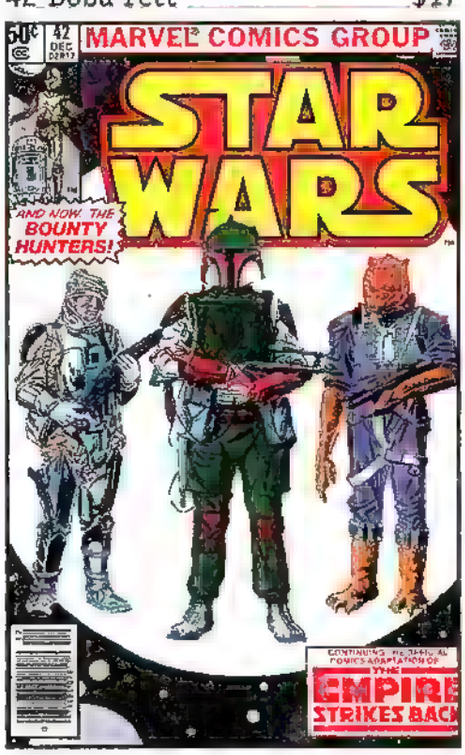
PRICE GUIDE

for Collectors and Sellers

Welcome to the Bleeding Cool Price Guide. This is a snippet of the kind of prices comics are selling for on the open market. Each issue we try for a theme, and this time it's Science Fiction! We look at a number of titles, from *Doctor Who* to *Star Wars*, that are rocking the market and report on the sale prices they have achieved on eBay. Values rise and fall, of course, and change around the country. A price listed here, is no guarantee you'll be able to sell yours for that price, but it might give you an idea of what someone, somewhere, is willing to pay! Retailers who would like to become part of an advisory board for the Price Guide feature should contact Jim Kuhoric via email: *jimkuhoric@bleedingcool.com*

Star Wars: Marvel Star Wars

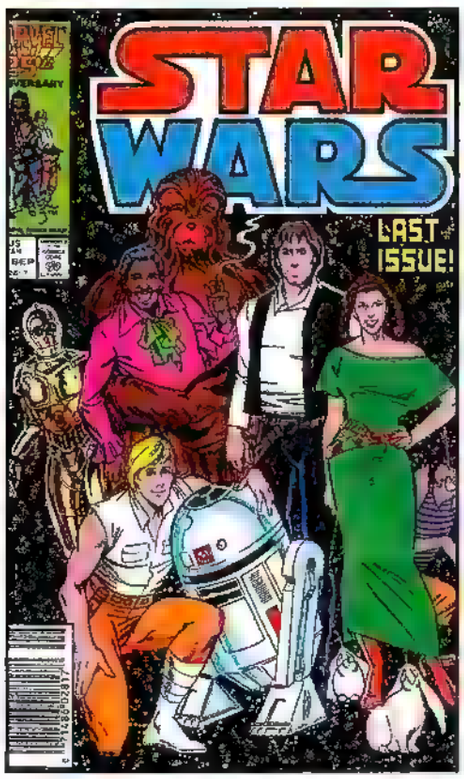
1 (35 cents)	$1300
1	$110
1 Reprint	$20
2 (35 cents)	$500
2	$35
3	$60
4	$23
5	$15
6	$60
7	$60
8	$13
9	$13
10	$10
11	$6
12	$12
13	$13
14	$10
15	$9
16	$7
17	$6
18	$12
19	$6
20	$7
21	$7
22	$6
23	$6
24	$7
25	$3
26	$3
27	$2
28	$3
29	$7
30	$6
31	$8
32	$2
33	$2
34	$6
35	$7
36	$3
37	$7
38	$8
39	$10
40	$7
41	$8
42 Boba Fett	$17



43	$5
44	$7
45	$8
46	$7
47	$6
48	$4
49	$2
50	$6
51	$7
52	$5
53	$7
54	$7
55	$2
56	$7
57	$6
58	$6
59	$6
60	$7
61	$5
62	$5
63	$12
64	$7
65	$2
66	$3
67	$8
68 Boba Fett	$20
69	$7
70	$5
71	$5
72	$7
73	$7
74	$8
75	$5
76	$6
77	$6
78	$7
79	$6
80	$7
81	$12
82	$6
83	$6
84	$7
85	$7
86	$10
87	$7
88	$7
89	$4
90	$9
91	$7
92	$9
93	$7
94	$9
95	$8
96	$12
97	$15
98	$8
99	$6

Star Wars: Marvel (cont.)

100 $8
101 $17
102 $10
103 $9
104 $18
105 $16
106 $17
107 Last Issue $60



Annual 1 $10

Ewoks

10 $5
13 $19

Droids

1 $6
5 $6

Star Wars Weekly

1 $100
2 $80

Star Wars Empire Strikes Back Weekly

1 $45

Star Wars Special Edition

1 $230
2 $27
3 $36

Star Wars Empire Special Edition

1 $32

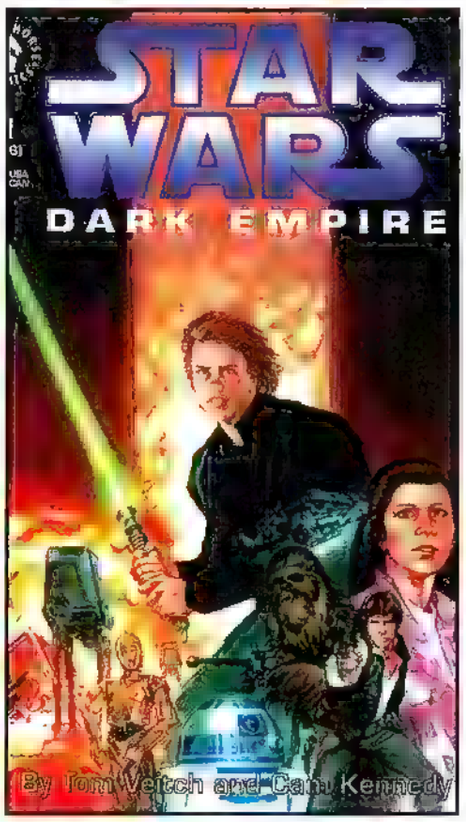
Star Wars Archie Goodwin Boxed

1 $100

Star Wars: Dark Horse

Star Wars Dark Empire

1 $10



1 Platinum $50

Star Wars Dark Empire II

1 $5
2 $5

Star Wars Crimson Empire

1 $3
2 $8

Star Wars Crimson Empire II

1 $3
2 $5

Star Wars Crimson Empire III

1 $9
6 $3

San Diego Comic Con

1994 $15

Star Wars Tales

1 $3
2 $3
3 $3
4 $3
5 $3
6 $8
7 $6
8 Vader Vs Maul $5
9 Garth Ennis $25
10 $7
11 $7
17 $7
19 $5
22 $7
23 $5

Star Wars Purge

Darth Vader $22

Star Wars Purge

Seconds to Die $5

Star Wars Blood Ties

1 $8

Star Wars Jedi Vs Sith

1 $5
2 $5

Star Wars Boba Fett 1/2

1/2 $15

Star Wars Boba Fett Is Dead

Summit $12

Star Wars (2013)

1 $40
1 Hastings $40

Star Wars Revenge of the Sith Mini

1 $39

Star Wars Old Republic Threat of Peace

1 Promo $35
1 $20
2 $12

Star Wars Mara Jade

2 $5
4 $5

Star Wars Dark Times

1 Sketch $20
1 Tate's Variant $35

Star Wars The Clone Wars

100 Var 1	$15

Star Wars Dawn of Jedi

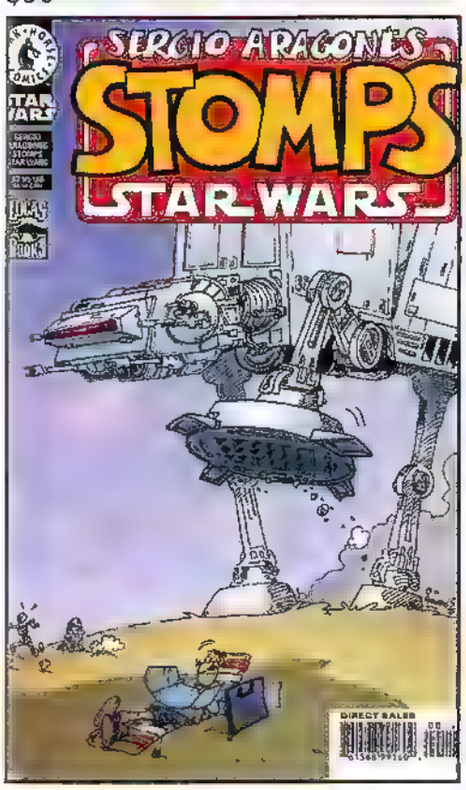
0	$11
1	$15
2	$8

Star Wars Knight Errant

2	$5
3	$5

Sergio Aragones Stomps Star Wars

$30



Star Wars Tag And Bink Are Dead

1	$13
2	$13

Star Wars Jedi: Aayla Secura

Aayla Secura	$10

Star Wars Jedi: Mace Windu

Mace Windu	$7

Star Wars Jedi: Shaak Ti

Shaak Ti	$11

Star Wars Jedi: Yoda

Yoda	$11

Star Wars Agent of Empire

1 Iron Eclipse	$10

Star Wars Boba Fett Agent of Doom

Boba Fett Agent of Doom	$5

Star Wars (1998)

0	$32
9	$6
25	$5
28	$5
30	$7
32	$5
35	$5
36	$6
40	$7

Star Wars Republic

65	$7
73	$7
78	$7
77	$5
81	$7
83	$7

Star Wars Jango Fett

2	$6

Star Wars Qui-Gon & Obi-Wan

2	$6

Star Wars Tales of the Jedi Sith War

4	$6
6	$6

Star Wars Darth Maul Death Sentence

1	$5

Star Wars Free Comic Book Day

2011	$7
2012	$6

Star Wars (Greek)

1	$30
2	$30
3	$30

Star Wars Empire

7	$7
19 Boba Fett	$6
28	$10

Star Wars Invasion Rescues

100 Var	$10

Star Wars Invasion Revelations

4	$5

Star Wars Legacy

1	$5
2	$5
3	$5
4	$5
5	$5
6	$5
8	$4
9	$4
11	$7
13	$7
14	$6
16	$10
20	$5
22	$9
46	$5
47	$5
48	$5

Star Wars Legacy: War

1	$15
5	$5

Star Wars Knights of the Old Republic

1	$6
4	$9

Star Wars Tales of the Jedi Redemption

1	$5
2	$5

Star Wars Obsession

3	$7

Star Wars Boba Fett

Bounty on Bar-Kooda	$6

Star Wars General Grevious

1	$7
4	$6

Star Wars Jango Fett Open Seasons

2	$7

Galactic Favorites

Warlock and the Infinity Watch

40 Thanos	$13
41 Thanos	$10
42 Thanos	$15

Guardians Galaxy (2008)

1	$66
1 2nd print	$22
8	$20
25	$22

The Death of Captain Marvel

1 Thanos	$30

Silver Surfer

34 Thanos	$15
148 Thanos	$18

Thanos

5	$12
7	$16
8	$16
12	$17

Thanos Imperative

1	$12

Thanos Quest

1	$25
2	$25

Deadpool

64 Thanos	$12

Cosmic Powers Unlimited

5 Thanos	$11

Infinity Gauntlet

1	$10

Rocket Raccoon

1	$15
2	$10
3	$8
4	$13

Doctor Who Weekly (Marvel)

1	$36

Doctor Who Annual (Marvel)

1975	$33
1985	$24

Doctor Who (Marvel)

1	$9

Doctor Who (IDW)

1 First David Tennant	$8

Doctor Who The Forgotten (IDW)

1	$7

Doctor Who (IDW)

1 First Matt Smith	$12
2	$9
3	$8
4	$8
Special 1	$8
Annual 1	$7

Star Trek/Doctor Who (IDW)

1	$10
2	$8
3	$8

Saga (Image)

1	$95
1 RRP	$400
2	$20
3	$18
4	$17
5	$20
6	$12
7	$13

7 Ghost	$20
8	$3
9	$3

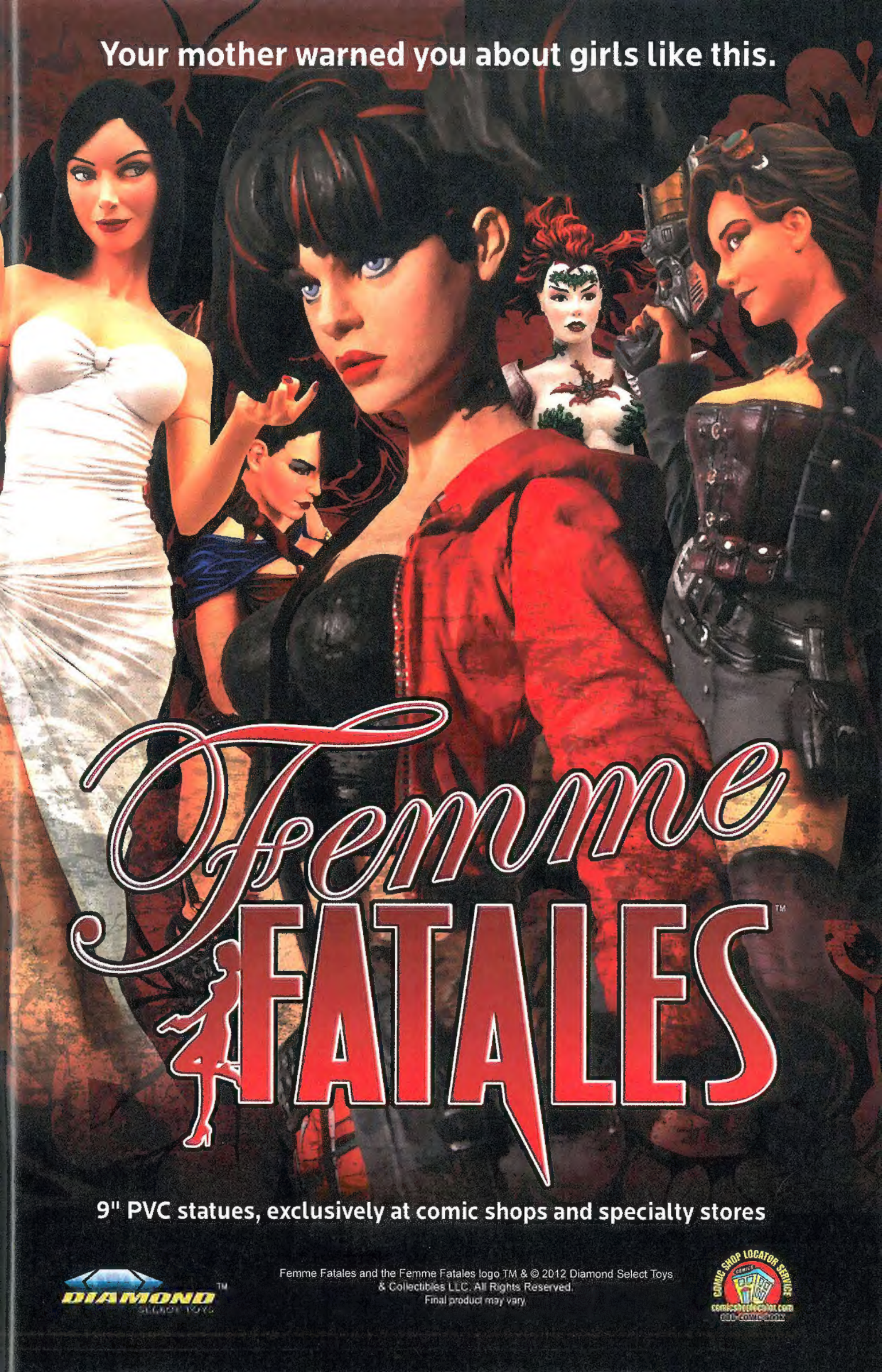
Manhattan Projects (Image)

1	$86
2	$19
3	$10
4	$5
5	$6
6	$13
7	$5
Hardcover	$85

Transmetropolitan (Vertigo)

1	$25
2	$10
3	$12
7	$10
8	$7
10	$5
12	$10
13	$9

Paid Advertisement:
Track your collection for free at:
www.comicbookrealm.com


Your mother warned you about girls like this.
Femme
FATALES
9" PVC statues, exclusively at comic shops and specialty stores
DIAMOND SELECT TOYS
Femme Fatales and the Femme Fatales logo TM & © 2012 Diamond Select Toys & Collectibles LLC. All Rights Reserved.
Final product may vary.
COMIC SHOP LOCATOR SERVICE

BLEEDING COOL DIRECTORY
Retailer List

United States and Territories

- Deep Comics & Collectibles: Huntsville, AL
- *Drawn to Comics: Glendale, AZ*
- Fantastic Comics: Berkley, CA
- *Super Heroes In Training: Escondido, CA*
- I.E. Comics and Games: Hemet, CA
- The Comic Bug: Manhattan Beach, CA
- Mile High Comics: Denver, CO
- The Comic Book Shop: Wilmington, DE
- Alley Cat Comics: Chicago, IL
- Graham Crackers: Chicago, IL
- Beyond Tomorrow: Palatine, IL
- *Discount Comic Book Service: Fort Wayne, IN*
- Creative Comics: Griffith, IN
- Comic Carnival: Indianapolis, IN
- Friendly Neighborhood Comics: Bellingham, MA
- Newbury Comics: Brighton, MA
- New England Comics: Brockton, MA
- Larry's Comics: Lowell, MA
- Harrison's Comics: Woburn, MA
- *Third Eye Comics: Annapolis, MD*
- Comics to Astonish: Columbia, MD
- *Collectors Corner: Parkville, MD*
- Big Ben's Comix Oasis: Allen Park, MI
- Wonderworld Comics & Games: Taylor, MI
- Source Comics & Games: Roseville, MN
- Newcastle Comics & Games: Maryland Hgts, MO
- Fantasy Shop: St Charles, MO
- Ultimate Comics: Durham, NC
- Acme Comics: Greensboro, NC
- Astro-Zombies: Albuquerque, NM
- Blu Planet Comics & Games: Massapequa, NY
- *Midtown Comics: New York, NY*
- All Heroes Comics: Rochester, NY
- Alterniverse: Salt Point, NY
- Fourth World Comics: Smithtown, NY
- Cleveland Comics: Cleveland, OH
- Rupps Comics: Fremont, OH
- Things From Another World: Milwaukie, OR
- TM Cards: Allentown, PA
- Comic Collection: Feasterville, PA
- Bell's Comics & Trading Cards: Grove City, PA
- New Dimension Comics: McMurray, PA
- America's Most Wanted Collectibles: Williamsport, PA
- Apocalypse Comics: N Myrtle Beach, SC
- Soundwave Music, Comics & Movies: Summerville, SC
- Lone Star: Arlington, TX
- Night Flight Comics: Salt Lake, UT
- Atlas Comics: Charlottesville, VA
- Untamed Worlds: Lynchburg, VA
- The Westfield Company: Middleton, WI

Canada

- Red Nails II: North York, ON
- The Beguiling: Toronto, ON
- Distribution Universe: St Laurent, QC

United Kingdom

- Ace Comics: Colchester, Essex CO1 1DN
- A Place in Space: Surrey CR0 1RN
- *Forbidden Planet Int'l: Glasgow, G1 2LW*
- Gosh! The London Comic Shop: Soho, London, W1F 0DR
- Orbital Comics Ltd: London, WC2H 7JA
- The Toy Tardis: Plymouth, PL1 1NJ
- Whatever Comics: Canterbury, Kent CT1 2AT

Being on the front line, so-to-speak, retailers know what fans are craving. Not only do fans want creative stories and fascinating characters, but they fiercely enjoy reading about the industry. While online is great for fast-breaking news and short sound-bytes, it seems fans are seeking more in-depth coverage, more editorial, more interviews with top creators, more... comic book fan goodness! On behalf of all of us as Bleeding Cool, we would like to thank the retailers on this page for helping us spread the joy of comics to their customers. Stop by and visit one of these stores and thank them for supporting the hobby by carrying Bleeding Cool Magazine!

Retailers can contact Jim Kuhoric via email at jimkuhoric@bleedingcool.com for opportunities to promote your local comic shops in Bleeding Cool Magazine.

BLEEDING COOL

BCM#3 Credits

Cover: Star Trek ©2013 CBS Studios, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

P2–3 Gail Simone, Dan DiDio, Mark Waid, Bill Jemas photos–Luigi Novi.

P5–11 Planet of the Apes TM & ©2013 20th Century Fox Film Corporation.

P13–18 Dr Who TM ©2013 BBC Worldwide.

P19–23 Revival ©Tim Seeley & Mike Norton. All rights reserved.

P25–30 Harbinger Wars, Harbinger, & Bloodshot TM ©2013 Valiant Entertainment, Inc.

P35–45 Star Wars ©Lucasfilm Ltd. & TM. All rights reserved.

P46–48 After Earth ©2013 Sony Pictures, Elysium ©2013 Sony Pictures, Alienate ©2013 Shumway Productions.

P49–57 Nick Fury, Punisher, & Doctor Strange TM ® ©2013 Marvel Entertainment. Moon and Serpent Bumper Book ©Alan Moore and Steve Moore 2013. Morning Dragons TM © Warren Ellis, Steve Lieber. Deathlok TM ® ©2013 Marvel Entertainment. The Prisoner TM©Everyman Films & Incorporated Television Company 2013. Justice League TM © ®2013 DC Comics, Transformers ©Hasbro 2013, The Real Robin Hood ©Barry Widsor-Smith 2013, Mimi Rodin ©Dave Stevens 2013, American Power ©Chuck Dixon & Greg Land 2013, Fantastic Four TM ® ©2013 Marvel Entertainment.

P58–61 Star Trek ©2013 CBS Studios, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

P62–67 Deathmatch, Matt Gagnon photo, 2 Guns TM ©BOOM! Studios, a division of Boom Entertainment, Inc. Adventure Time TM ©2013 Cartoon Network.

P69–73 Warlord of Mars, Dejah Thoris and the Green Men of Mars ©2013 Dynamite Characters, llc.

P74–75 Battlestar Galactica ©2013 USA Cable Entertainment, LLC. All rights reserved.

P77–81 Executive Assistant: Iris, Legend of the Shadow Clan, Shrugged, Jimi, Charismagic, Fathom, Bubblegun, Trish Out of Water, Soulfire, Awaken Skies, & Overtaken TM ©2013 Aspen MLT, Inc.

P82–86 Battlestar Galactica ©2013 USA Cable Entertainment, LLC, Serenity ©2013 Universal Studios Licensing. All rights reserved.

P87–90 Crossed TM & ©2013 Garth Ennis.

P91–93 Marvel Super Heroes #18, Iron Man #55, & Strange Tales #180 TM ® ©2013 Marvel Entertainment.

P94–95 Superman #14 & 54, Jimmy Olsen #134 TM ©DC Comics. Tales to Astonish #13 TM ©Marvel Entertainment.

P97–98 Star Wars ©Lucasfilm Ltd. & TM. All rights reserved. Amazing Spider-Man, Superior Spider-Man, Avengers TM ® ©2013 Marvel Entertainment.

P99–102 Star Wars ©Lucasfilm Ltd. & TM. All rights reserved. Thanos TM ® ©2013 Marvel Entertainment, Saga TM ©2013 Brian K Vaughn & Fiona Staples, Manhattan Projects TM & ©Jonathan Hickman & Nick Pittara

Next Issue

Rich Johnston continues his scoops and snark as we look at the biggest geek releases of the Summer! From the top comic releases and the hottest Indy titles, to all the biggest news from *World War Z*, *The Wolverine*, and more! This issue also features his look at the Top Women Working in Comics list! And BCM features a huge Max Brooks interview with the big reveal of his epic new vampires vs zombies series! Exclusive behind the scenes interviews and images turn Bleeding Cool Magazine into your source for summer scoops. Delivering over 100 pages per issue on a bi-monthly release schedule, you are not going to want to miss Rich's Life in the Gutters, Expanded Price Guide, and Hot Comics = CASH columns. Over a million monthly BleedingCool.com visitors can't be wrong! Delivering the best of comics and film with the right mix of innovation, snark, and spell-checking, it's Bleeding Cool!

Item Code: FEB130807

A new ongoing series by Kieron Gillen!
1945. Germany is in ruins. The war in the west can only be days away from ending. Threats of "wunder-waffen" to be unleashed by the dying Reich have become laughable. There are no miracle weapons here. It's over. It has to be over.
It's not.
KIERON GILLEN
Über™
illustrated by Caanan White
AVATAR™